EXPERIMENTS IN EXILE

C. L. R. James, Hélio Oiticica, and the Aesthetic Sociality of Blackness

LAURA HARRIS

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EXPERIMENTS IN EXILE

INTRODUCTION

Experiments in Exile

In *Experiments in Exile*, I explore and compare projects undertaken by two twentieth-century American intellectuals while they lived in voluntary exiles in the United States: the Trinidadian writer and revolutionary C. L. R. James and the Brazilian visual artist and counterculturalist Hélio Oiticica. James and Oiticica never met. They lived and worked in the United States at different moments. My focus is on James's stay during the 1940s and on Oiticica's stay during the 1970s. Given the significant differences between them—not just at the level of nationality but at the level of race (James was black, Oiticica was white), class (James was situated within a precarious middle class, Oiticica was firmly established within an upper middle class), sexuality (James was straight, Oiticica was gay), and disciplinary locations (James is generally situated in the history of radical social theory and practice, and Oiticica is generally situated in the history of avant-garde aesthetic theory and practice)—this is surely an unlikely combination. This study is itself an experiment, one that goes beyond the usual parameters of comparativist or transnational research, to identify, in the surprising resonances between the projects pursued by these two very disparate figures, a common project I believe they, together, bring into relief.

In the context of repressive states—in James's case a crown colony of Britain and in Oiticica's case a military dictatorship and then later, in both cases, in the United States—where citizenship was differentially conferred and foreclosed, restricted and at the same time restrictive, both James and Oiticica sought alternatives to the social relations of citizens by studying and attempting very different modes of sociality or collective life. While at first James and Oiticica tried to live the social life of the citizen, by contributing, through the publication or public exhibition of aesthetic works, to

the formulation of a specifically Trinidadian or Brazilian national culture, their practices were radicalized by their contact with black performance. They studied the public performance of cricket and samba by black players and dancers but also the more informal quotidian performances they encountered in the margins, in the barrack yards of Port of Spain and the favelas of Rio de Janeiro, among the poor, mostly black, but always also motley residents of those spaces. These residents lived, for the most part, on the outskirts of citizenship, excluded from political life but also from the public discussions and debates through which the Trinidadian and Brazilian nations and national aesthetics were being explicitly authored. In fact, these residents and their unruly aesthetic and social practices had historically been a "problem" for these nations and were historically the criminalized objects of the state and its ongoing efforts to expropriate, displace, regulate, contain, or exterminate through whatever means necessary, in "defense" of itself and its citizenry (even as the state began to stage and promote official performances of cricket and samba as emblems of national culture).

James and Oiticica were both drawn to the modes of composition, arrangement, or organization, simultaneously aesthetic and social, in and through which these performances took shape. In them, they found what they understood to be vital resources for living otherwise, for formulating an alternative to the social life of the citizen. Their serious long-term studies, as observers and participants, of these performances and the fundamentally dissident forms of congregation and collaboration they entailed—what I refer to in this book as the aesthetic sociality of blackness—are, I argue, foundational for their subsequent work. The striking resonances between their accounts of this aesthetic sociality, of the radical nature of its forms and formation, and their attempts to enter into it and at the same time integrate it into their own work is the starting point for my comparison, the basis for my claim that their oeuvres are linked in a larger formation that is structured by this aesthetic sociality.

By blackness, I do not mean to indicate, or to only indicate, African descent. My understanding of blackness here is informed by the writing of many scholars within black studies who have theorized blackness as that which designates irreducible difference, a mode of being that the modern bourgeois subject, conceived in and by European thought—the sovereign subject who is the model for both citizenship and aesthetic

authorship—cannot accommodate. Cedric J. Robinson associates this difference with a "principle of incompleteness" in which "all are equally incomplete." Hortense J. Spillers locates it in the vestibularity of undifferentiated or nonbodied, ungendered "flesh." Denise Ferreira da Silva associates it with "affectability" and a form of entanglement that suggests "difference without separability," without "determinacy or sequentiality." Fred Moten describes it as, among other things, indiscretion or "blur," which is tied, for him, to "the social field and social life of an illicit alternative capacity to desire."[1] Blackness, in this sense, manifests itself in what is perceived as the unruly creativity and disorderly sociality that the subject, in its commitment to the idea of its own freedom as self-determination, as the self-conscious exercise of pure individual will, secured by self-possession, must at all costs defend itself against, however violent its defensive maneuvers may be as it confronts the impossibility of this "freedom." Such violence results from and is justified by what Spillers calls "the tendency to perceive a coterminous relationship between the symbolic boundaries of black and the physical, genetic manifestation named black,"[2] particularly within the context of racial capitalism and racial capitalism's extension in the Americas. Insofar as blackness comes to designate all that this subject refuses, the aesthetic and social forms that have been historically identified with blackness as symbolic category, those that have been most fervently denigrated, harbor the basis for an alternative to this subjecthood, the fraternal (and at the same time heteropatriarchal) social relations it has structured and the havoc it has wreaked. They carry forward another idea of being and of freedom, or something even beyond these already circumscribed notions. As Silva argues, as much as blackness is an "index" of the violent history of slavery and the ongoing exploitation of black labor (which cannot be disarticulated from the history of settler colonialism, expropriation and enclosure, and the brutal imposition of waged labor and unwaged domestic labor or the various forms of indenture through which slavery is extended), it is also an index of other possibilities, forms of life that exceed the terms of the modern subject, the social relations of citizens and the aesthetic production of individual authors, and that are continually reinvented within the context of its "vestibular" location with respect to them. Exploring blackness and its creative capacity is necessary, Silva insists, "for opening up the possibility for a radical departure from a certain kind of World."[3] James and Oiticica perceived something like this

creative capacity and the possibility of an alternative, of a new world, a new new world or, rather, another experience of "world" that this creative capacity points toward in black performance in cricket and samba but also in the everyday practices of the barrack yards and the favelas, where blackness is most fervently ascribed and most violently attacked in the name of self-defense. In what is often perceived as underdevelopment, James and Oiticica saw an insurgent generativity that racial capitalist "development" or "redevelopment" cannot fully regulate or shut down.

By locating the aesthetic sociality of "blackness" in these performances, I do not mean to renaturalize the "coterminous relationship" that Spillers seeks to denaturalize between blackness and the black people who perform it, for while these performances are shaped in part by the memory of African traditions and the historical experience of resisting and surviving the Middle Passage, slavery, and an always incomplete emancipation, not only is not every performer necessarily physically or genetically "black" (again blackness here is not a matter, or not only a matter, of genetic or biological descent), but it is not just people but rather a whole field of biological and nonbiological elements that are put in play in the kinds of "assembly" that constitute the forms of this aesthetic sociality. Nor do I mean to suggest that these kinds of performances embody blackness in some sort of pure form, as pure instances of the difference that blackness, whether spatially (geographically) or temporally (historically) mapped, is meant to designate. Blackness, in the sense that I invoke it, as an always already given impurity, is an expansive formation whose boundaries and associations are not fixed. The aesthetic sociality of blackness is its ongoing recollective but also innovative and experimental insurgent expression.

James and Oiticica encountered this aesthetic sociality in the midst of their attempts to assert themselves as citizen-authors, to enter into the project of shaping—anticipating or redefining—a Trinidadian (or West Indian) and Brazilian (or "Tropical") nation, even as James's political citizenship was precluded, through the crown colony's denial of even "home rule," and as Oiticica's citizenship was severely curtailed, by the dictatorship's suspension of constitutional rights and protections. They did so from their different positions and in their different contexts (whose specificity I do not mean to collapse so much as align) alongside many other authors across the Americas after slavery, who are contending with the "problem" that blackness, attached to the "problem" of a postabolition

black underclass, poses for the nation, imagined as a still developing collective subject whose self-determination or sovereignty would depend on its own individuation—separation and independence, in the first place, from the European nations to which it was initially tied but more fundamentally from blackness's uncontainment. Blackness, as difference, in these contexts, has to be, if not simply exterminated, symbolically subsumed within the nation-state, through assimilation or "civilization," a vision imposed by the British colonial government and maintained by the Afro-Saxon Trinidadian middle class, or through the miscegenative "whitening" or "anthropophagic" absorption envisioned by the Brazilian elite and idealized by Brazilian intellectuals such as anthropologist Gilberto Freyre or the modernist poet Oswaldo de Andrade.[4] It remains in force, however, as the dissonant and dissident difference that threatens the coherent identities of these nations or nation-states and must be kept in check.

As James and Oiticica studied the aesthetic sociality of blackness, as they attempted to enter into and attune themselves to its improvised and innovative structures and rhythms, they tried to find ways to integrate it into their projects. They tried first to appropriate elements of it in their own aesthetic practices and into their own individually authored works. But the aesthetic sociality of blackness resists any easy appropriation. If James and Oiticica made a claim on it, it also made a claim on them, undertaking its own experiments in and through James's and Oiticica's aesthetic work, reconfiguring and rerouting both of their projects in ways they had not anticipated. James and Oiticica were each open to these unexpected effects and the radical possibilities, the insurgent forms of congregation and collaboration—aesthetic and social—they seemed to suggest, which exceeded the more limited and limiting forms of "participation" through citizenship to which they had previously aspired.

When, finding conditions within unrelenting colonial government in Trinidad and the increasingly repressive military dictatorship in Brazil to be inhospitable to such experiments, James and Oiticica embarked on their voluntary exiles, they carried these resources with them. In turn, these resources continued to work in and through James's and Oiticica's work, just as James and Oiticica continued to rethink them, and rethink through them, while reorienting themselves to and through their effects. The experiments in exile that this book takes up, then, began in Port of

Spain and Rio de Janeiro—and even before then, with the forms of exile, the multiple forms of forced migration that have shaped the possibilities for assembly, for making an art of the social practice of assembly, in those locations—but move, in ways that are both voluntary and imposed, with James and Oiticica in their travels. I examine, in particular, the way these experiments take shape during James's and Oiticica's sojourns in the United States, where James lived (for the first time) from 1939 to 1953 and where Oiticica lived (for the second time) from 1971 to 1978.

James's and Oiticica's experiences of exile, in which exile is an experimental undertaking, diverge from those of European intellectuals, celebrated in and by a United States that posits itself, particularly in the Cold War period, as a haven for embattled thinkers and a zone of intellectual freedom in an unfree world. The exile of the fêted European intellectual who is welcomed and well funded by cultural and scholarly institutions and whose work becomes central to the United States' own political self-theorization, for which the exclusion of the aesthetic sociality of blackness is constitutive,[5] is, of necessity, fundamentally different from those of James and Oiticica, who gravitate to zones that had been considered on the far edge of or deep below social, aesthetic, and intellectual possibility and to the forms of subjugated knowledge they find there.[6] Their exiles are, rather, shaped by the assumption of another intellectuality, a black intellectuality that remains open—if we do disturb the tendency that Spillers marks and accept the expansiveness of blackness's symbolic boundaries and its field of reference—even to those who might never have imagined themselves to be part of that field.

This is not to say that James and Oiticica were not deeply embedded in European thought, its models for being and visions for freedom. If I do not foreground their investments in European aesthetics and philosophy as fully as others have, that is not because they are at all insignificant. James and Oiticica studied the Euro-centered intellectual tradition intensely, probing and wrestling with it in complex, critical, and innovative ways, but their efforts are often constrained by its conceptual frameworks. No matter how broadly they construe it (and they do construe it more broadly than most, finding as much significance in its "low" forms as its "high" forms), it cannot accommodate their projects, not even in those instances—and they are drawn to those instances in even the most seemingly rigid of thinkers (such as Lenin or Mondrian)—when that intellectuality attempts

to stage the conditions for its own unraveling. The language they use, of the worker or the body, as well as that of the national author or artist, still invokes and is still structured around the travails of individual subjects operating, separately, "in relation" to one another and to their racialized foils. Such language is not adequate to and at times is even at odds with the radical nature of what James and Oiticica seek and attempt to enact, which I argue ultimately exceeds these frameworks. If I have quoted extensively in this book, dwelled on James's and Oiticica's strange phrasing and its equally strange arrangement, it is because I am interested in the way James and Oiticica strain against the limits of these frameworks in reaching for something more, in trying to formulate new forms, new frameworks, however awkwardly and imperfectly—just as I often find myself doing in my own attempts to account for their efforts. The primary "works" I focus on in this book are not among those generally thought of as James's and Oiticica's masterworks. I am interested in the roughness and disorderliness of these grandly ambitious yet never completed undertakings. I am interested in the way James's and Oiticica's efforts are propelled by a deep, if always also ambivalent, desire for that something more—something that would be beyond their own individual capacity to realize, that they alone could not author, that would ultimately have to be completed by others. They are always trying to find the forms that would begin to define but not confine these projects, that would open them to contact with others and to contact's disruptive but also generative—productive and reproductive—effects. The forms they sought would not be vessels or vehicles for the projection of the subject but alternative contact zones where new relations or, rather, new experiences of enmeshment could be worked out.

So while Euro-centered aesthetics and philosophy were absolutely formative for and never cease to be important to James's and Oiticica's thinking, their projects are also shaped by their interest in and openness to this something more. They found this, even if they did not yet know they were seeking it, even if their engagement with it was sometimes problematic or ambivalent, in the aesthetic sociality of blackness. And the aesthetic sociality of blackness is extended in these contact zones, through the conflicts, erotics, and generativity of interclass and interracial and queer collaboration and the disruption and reconfiguration of gender structures that occur within the new notions of production and reproduction that this collaboration requires. James's and Oiticica's strange "works" or not-works

emerge in and as the documentation of this collaborative "working," labor in both senses of the word, in and as what I call undocumentation, orienting them toward new forms of social, aesthetic, and intellectual life.

The mode of intellectuality that the aesthetic sociality of blackness enacts is not reducible to attempts to refute European intellectuality or to struggles for access to or inclusion by excluded elites who would seek to claim what they understand to be their rightful place in the existing order of things. Rather, it emerges from and engages with the resources James and Oiticica encountered in the performance of cricket and samba, which was for them linked to the more quotidian performances that shaped and were shaped by the social spaces and spaces-between of the barrack yards and the favelas (where the difficulties as well as the pleasures and powers of enmeshment are made so fully apparent and so fully recognizable as a threat to the nation-state), the ongoing experiments in exile—which are also ongoing experiments in the practice of assembly[7]—carried out there, at the margins of the polis. James's and Oiticica's experiments in exile begin with their studies there, with their understanding of the creative experiments that constitute the aesthetic sociality of blackness as vital intellectual resources, both an irreducible part of the intellectual matter they will take into account and a fundamental aspect of the method for that accounting.

This is not to say, either, that in James's and Oiticica's interest in blackness as it appears in or in relation to these spaces that are often called "slums," they were not, at least initially, performing what is often called "slumming." They came to the barrack yards and favelas and then left, taking and using what they found to enhance their already formulated projects without being subject to the violent forms of discipline, regulation, and containment that those who could not leave had no choice but to contend with. We could say that they did not belong in these spaces. We could also say that what they found in these spaces did not belong to them. But their claims on European forms and practices were no more natural or legitimate. And the unintended, unanticipated effects of their appropriations of the aesthetic sociality of blackness, its disruptive appropriation of *their* preestablished projects, suggests that the aesthetic sociality of blackness is something that resists ownership, contests the very idea of ownership. Belonging in both senses is troubled by James's and Oiticica's encounters. And the fact that James and Oiticica were open (though

certainly not without ambivalence) to such counterappropriation suggests that encounters such as these may not always necessarily be reducible to the pregiven static "relations" in which the clear separation between parties that the term "slumming" generally signifies is maintained. What if such encounters could exceed mere slumming? What if contact of this kind could widen the scope of motley association in generative ways? These are among the questions that James and Oiticica pursued, however vexed that pursuit might have been, as they continued to return to the scenes they first explored, for further, more serious study, and as they attempted to seek out and ultimately create new contexts for contact and to imagine how they themselves might potentially figure in. In doing so, I argue, they entered into and extended the very black intellectuality they studied, not as proprietors but as apprentice-practitioners, in Trinidad and Brazil and again in the United States.

It is not so much, then, that James and Oiticica dispense with the resources of European thought or disavow the relative privileges that they have but that they seek out, in spaces that are generally understood only as zones of absolute deprivation, resources that are not usually understood as resources, privileges that are not often understood as privileges. Such resources and privileges are, for James and Oiticica, the condition of possibility for another world articulated in the desire for another world, in a sense of its necessity. This desire is also central to black intellectuality, to its critique of Western civilization, which is grounded in the insistence on living otherwise and which, for the most part, eschews attempts to recover an originary "home" or some already given stable existence that had been cut short.[8] It seeks this new world and another idea of world. And in its preoccupation with alternative existence, this intellectual mode is explicitly and necessarily experimental.

In exile in the United States, this black intellectuality is undocumented. It is enacted by dissident drifters, who were themselves not at home, even at home, eternal internal aliens whose status as such is now redoubled. While James and Oiticica both obtained valid visitor's visas for their initial entry into the United States, both were denied extensions and effectively expelled for what the U.S. government deemed unacceptable forms of association. (Although James was married to a U.S. citizen with whom he had a child, he was barred because of his interactions with dissident workers, and although Oiticica had a paying job, he was barred because

of his homosexuality.) And the experiments in which they were engaged proved as foreign to proper citizenship and subjectivity in the United States as they had in Trinidad and Brazil (where James was a colonial subject and Oiticica was in danger of being arrested, as other friends had been, under the restrictions on citizenship imposed by the military regime). Both James and Oiticica stayed on in the United States, but both did so unofficially, living out their sojourns underground, before they were forced to leave by U.S. authorities. James and Oiticica wanted to stay in the United States, but in the United States as it existed (which not only prevented them from obtaining the citizenship or legal residency that they sought but was actively engaged in the process of restructuring their homelands, through military occupation in Trinidad and military support, however unofficial and indirect, for the dictatorship in Brazil). They wanted to live and work in in the United States as it might be, the United States whose beginnings might be found beneath the state, on the outskirts of citizenship proper, and the limited kinds of belonging and participation that citizenship allows. What they sought in this underground, what they attempted to construct in and beyond it, is a different kind of sociality, a different way of being and belonging together, of acting and creating in concert, for themselves but also for others: not citizenship but a kind of critical noncitizenship,[9] a free and motley association that would materialize in dissident, disruptive work and works, the undocuments of the undocumented. The sociality that James and Oiticica sought, in its motleyness and its dissidence, renews and reconfigures the insurgent sociality of the motley crew that Peter Linebaugh and Marcus Rediker describe in *The Many-Headed Hydra: Sailors, Slaves, Commoners, and the Hidden History of the Revolutionary Atlantic*, their study of the transatlantic working class of the seventeenth, eighteenth, and early nineteenth centuries, before blackness and citizenship became clearly divided categories. I take up this text in the chapters that follow, reading James's and Oiticica's projects in relation to Linebaugh and Rediker's claims that such a sociality was lost, their inability to find any evidence of its persistence or of its futurity. I hope to demonstrate that the motley crew, which Linebaugh and Rediker have so narrowly construed, can be found in other forms, in and as other worlds already at work within or rather beneath this world, reproduced in and through the unformed, unseemly debris of the working of its denizens. This is the common project that I believe James's and Oiticica's projects illuminate and extend without

themselves fully encompassing or completing. Its forms are by no means limited to the ones I have tried to trace here.

In chapter 1, I examine James's and Oiticica's "discovery" of what I understand to be the active remains of the motley crew in the aesthetic sociality of blackness. I compare their analyses of this radical aesthetic sociality in the creative practices they encountered, first in the spectacular performance of cricket and samba and then in the more quotidian performances that were, for James and Oiticica, connected to cricket and samba, the more seemingly ordinary forms of composition, arrangement, and organization that James observed in the barrack yards and that Oiticica observed in the favelas. Both attempted to claim the aesthetic sociality of blackness by appropriating elements of it in some of their early experiments—James's *Minty Alley*, the novel he wrote in Trinidad as an "exercise," and Oiticica's *Parangolé* series, banners, tents, and, most famously, capes whose activation would constitute what he came to describe, through a phrase he adopted from the Brazilian art critic Mário Pedrosa, as an "experimental exercise of freedom." I explore the ways their claims took shape in these early works and the way that aesthetic sociality enacted a counterclaim, opening up those shapes, using them as a vehicle for its own expression in ways that cannot quite be contained by the works themselves or the gesture of appropriation.

In chapter 2, I recount James's and Oiticica's entries into the United States and their attempts to situate themselves there. Invited into the professional milieus of radical politics and the art world, they were both dissatisfied with the narrowness of the creative practices they found in these contexts. Both sought communion with the population at large, imagining something like a more expansive and inclusive form of citizenship through the collective reception of popular art, but the opportunity for such reception was already lost or still anticipated, both fleeting and elusive. In the face of this inconstancy, they worked to build new apparatuses through which they could invite and structure, provisionally, a different kind of contact, with and between those involved in what they considered to be the most radical activities in the United States at that time, the disenfranchised, the criminal, the marginal, the queer, the ones who precariously inhabited citizenship's outer edge in modes of aesthetic sociality that were both severely constrained and unprecedentedly open. In this search, James looked beyond the structure of the revolutionary party that had first

brought him to the United States, and beyond its propagandizing publications, which had been his primary forum, to establish along with others he met through the revolutionary worker's movement a wholly new type of organization and organ, the Correspondence Publishing Committee and *Correspondence*, its newspaper. Similarly, Oiticica's efforts were directed less and less toward the public exhibition of art objects. Reusing the materials from the museum installation through which he had first gained recognition in the United States, he built new structures, "Nests" that he called *Babylônests* and then *Hendrixsts*, as living and working spaces within his own apartments. The new forms of aesthetic sociality that James and Oiticica sought to generate or stimulate took shape in and through new experimental practices that attempted to reformulate, I argue, the very idea of work or working as their bases and the domestic and sexual arrangements from which they were inextricable.

In chapter 3, I consider what was produced by way of the work or working in the organ/ization and the Nests: a massive effusion of documents, most of which were proposals for projects that had yet to be carried out. I examine two key texts—again, not the masterworks for which James and Oiticica are more generally recognized but the ambitious, messy, unresolved, unfinished manuscripts that remained, for a long time, uncompiled and unedited, in their archives: "Notes on American Civilization" and *Newyorkaises*. I consider the way these "works" were proposed but not (until posthumously published) closed and examine their resistance to the terminal condition of work, in documents, or undocuments, that aspire to their own dissolution in a socialization of the intellectual function that would enact the kind of sociality James and Oiticica desired. I argue that these open documents or undocuments are the site, or at least a site, through which the motley crew or something like it might be reproduced and extended. I explore, finally, their reconfigurations of reproduction, as a sexual but not necessarily heterosexual or even biological process, oriented toward a future imagined not as the life of the individuated child but as new or renewed forms of congregation and collaboration, modeled on the kinds that had been sustained and innovated in and through the aesthetic sociality of blackness. By ending (or not ending) with their nonendings ("this (therefore) *will not have been a book*"),[10] I mean to offer not a conclusion to the experiment pursued here but an invitation to extend it.

The documents within and across which James's and Oiticica's works were produced, in collaboration with others, are stored away, for the most part, in archives. Many of James's personal papers have finally been made available to scholars at Columbia University but had until then been held and maintained by the James estate or at the University of the West Indies, remaining relatively inaccessible to U.S. scholars. I read copies of documents that were included among the papers of other members of the Correspondence group, including Constance Webb's papers, available at the Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture in New York, and Martin and Jesse Glaberman's, Lyman and Freddy Paine's, and Raya Dunayevskaya's papers, available at the Walter P. Reuther Library of Labor and Urban Affairs at Wayne State University in Detroit, and publications by Grace Lee Boggs recounting their collective work. Oiticica's papers have been maintained by Projeto Hélio Oiticica (The Hélio Oiticica Project), coordinated by the Oiticica family. Cesar Oiticica and Cesar Oiticica Filho and archivists Ariane Figueiredo and Daniela Matera graciously gave me computer discs with facsimiles of all of Oiticica's papers. Those papers, largely in Portuguese, are now available to the general public by way of a web archive, Programa Hélio Oiticica, produced by Projeto Hélio Oiticica with the support of the cultural institute Itaú Cultural, of the Brazilian bank Banco Itaú.

A large contribution, however, has been made by scholars who have introduced or reintroduced previously unavailable works by James or Oiticica. This study has benefited from the efforts of Martin J. Glaberman (one of James's collaborators), Selwyn Cudgoe, Scott Lemee, Anna Grimshaw, and Keith Hart, as well as Robert A. Hill (James's literary executor), who is now directing the C. L. R. James Project at Duke University and has overseen the publication of a series of books by and about James through Duke University Press and more recently Christian Høgsbjerg. Although much of Oiticica's oeuvre was destroyed in a fire in 2009, Projeto Hélio Oiticica has safeguarded the materials that remain. It has produced a number of books and exhibition catalogues published in conjunction with exhibitions held at the Centro de Arte Hélio Oiticica in Rio de Janeiro, including a collection of Oiticica's writing, edited by Luciano Figueiredo, Lygia Pape, and Waly Salomão, *Aspiro ao grande labarinto* (1986) and, more recently, *COSMOCOCA: Programa in progress* (2005) and *Hélio Oiticica: Museo e o mundo Conglomerado Newyorkaises*, edited by Cesar Oiticica Filho and Frederico Coelho (2013). Additional materials have been made available

through catalogues published in conjunction with international exhibitions of Oiticica's artworks. Projeto Hélio Oiticica has worked with a number of other curators to recreate some of Oiticica's most complex works, and over the past ten years there have been several major retrospectives that have included catalogues with new translations of his notes.[11]

The scholarship, appearing often in the introductions and afterwords to publications or republications of James's and Oiticica's works but also in edited collections and increasingly in monograph form, has been important not least for its attempt to reconstruct the undocumented experiences of figures who remained for a long time relatively obscure to U.S. audiences (in part because their works were difficult to access) and were excluded, at least in the United States, from most general histories of the intellectual traditions they passed through. Given the responsibility such scholarship has had to take on for presenting an underrepresented and at the same time massive body of work, many writers have attempted a comprehensive overview and analysis of these oeuvres, approaching James's and Oiticica's oeuvres from an individual authorship or *auteur* perspective.[12] And while other writers have included James and Oiticica within the context of national or regional intellectual and aesthetic histories, no one, as far as I know, has ever put these two figures together under the auspices of a common history. The black radical tradition as critique of Western civilization, first described by Cedric J. Robinson in *Black Marxism: The Making of the Black Radical Tradition* and expanded on by many other scholars since then, comes closest. The experiments I describe here point to a perhaps less recognizably coherent (at the level of what is commonly meant by "blackness" as well as what we generally understand to be an intellectual tradition) but, I believe, no less radical version. Its apparent dispersion, its discontinuity, its openness, and its impurity are not necessarily its faults but among its most important features. While Robinson identifies James as a key figure within the black radical tradition, he writes that he suspects that the tradition "extends into cultural and political terrains far beyond [his] competence to relate."[13] Following the path opened by many scholars who have been writing about the aesthetics of the black radical tradition, this study pursues the possibility that we might understand the field of black intellectuality and its participants in still broader terms, without dissolving its specificity or radicality.

Ultimately, this study is not about James and Oiticica; it is about the aesthetic sociality of blackness that they perceived and tried to theorize, join, and extend. If, in my treatment of these figures, then, I am breaking protocol, if I am not recapitulating the usual bildungsromans, the individual or national biographies or disciplinary narratives through which James's and Oiticica's oeuvres are usually framed and contextualized, even at times by James and Oiticica themselves, this is not because I mean to disregard or dismiss those narratives. What I have written here is informed by many excellent studies conducted along these lines. If what I write here diverges from those other kinds of historical accounts, it is because I am arguing that only ever placing and re-placing these figures within the larger narratives and frameworks that structure these accounts, even if we place them as cutting-edge innovators, misses the alternative, insurgent formation, that I see both in and across their oeuvres, and that exceeds their oeuvres. I put them together, then, when they do not seem to belong together, in part to put into question the terms of such belonging, to point, in and through their experiments in belonging—or, as they might put it, association or accompaniment—to more motley and, I would argue, fundamentally dissident formations of the kind that Linebaugh and Rediker seem to suggest are altogether lost but that I think James and Oiticica would urge us to believe are still emerging.

1

WHAT HAPPENED TO THE MOTLEY CREW?

James, Oiticica, and the Aesthetic Sociality of Blackness

In *The Many-Headed Hydra: Sailors, Slaves, Commoners, and the Hidden History of the Revolutionary Atlantic*, the historians Peter Linebaugh and Marcus Rediker uncover the lost history of the motley crew, an insurgent social formation that emerged from the connections that developed between the disparate people, violently dispossessed and dispersed by the interlinked systems of enclosure, whom settler colonialism and slavery forced into brutal regimes of labor, who composed what they call the Atlantic proletariat of the seventeenth, eighteenth, and early nineteenth centuries. According to Linebaugh and Rediker, this Atlantic proletariat was marked by its difference. Its "coherence" as a social formation emerged in and through internal and external dissonance and dissidence. As they note, it "was not a unified cultural class, and it was not a race." It was "*motley*, both dressed in rags and multi-ethnic in appearance." It was "anonymous, nameless," and, at the same time, "*multitudinous*, *numerous*, *growing*." Though it was "*female* and *male*, of *all ages*," it was figured, historically, by the self-styled Herculean heroes of the newly globalizing formal economy, as a feminized chthonic monster, a many-headed hydra that survives attempts to kill it with its "wayward reproductivity": whenever one of its heads is chopped off, a new one grows in its place.[1] This Atlantic proletariat was, moreover, fundamentally "*cooperative* and *laboring*." And while subject to terror and coercion ("its hide was calloused by indentured labor, galley slavery, plantation slavery, convict transportation, the workhouse, the house of correction"), it was always also, Linebaugh and Rediker insist, "*self-active*" (though we will have to explore what "self-active" means) and "*creative*."[2]

The motley crew began, Linebaugh and Rediker argue, as a "unit of human cooperation" assembled from, for example, a ship's company or, on plantations, "beneath the whip" for the performance of specific tasks. Managers of the new economy often deliberately mixed people of different languages and ethnicities in order to discourage any solidarities that might exceed their capacity to regulate and exploit, but as Linebaugh and Rediker show, the very cooperation on which these managers depended seems inevitably and serially to have resisted and disrupted this strategy. Through such cooperation, the motley crew reconfigured itself, becoming, in Linebaugh and Rediker's words, "a socio-political formation." Its later iterations were "armed agglomerations of various crews and gangs, that possessed their own motility and were often independent of leadership from above."[3] The motley crew that coalesces as the focus of Linebaugh and Rediker's historical analysis absorbs and combines the various forms of collaborative insurgency that developed as a crucial counterforce within the new global economy, connecting them without collapsing the differences between them. Its motleyness reemerges as action in concert: in unharmonious revolt and in the revolutionizing of harmony. This is to say, in Linebaugh and Rediker's terms,

> Over time the second (political) meaning emerged from the first (technical) one, broadening the cooperation, extending the range of activity, and transferring the command from overseers or petty officers to the group itself. This transition was manifested in the actions of the motley crew in the streets of the port cities: as sailors moved from ship to shore, they joined waterfront communities of dockers, porters, and laborers, freedom-seeking slaves, footloose youth from the country, and fugitives of various kinds. At the peak of revolutionary possibility, the motley crew appeared as a synchronicity or an actual coordination among the "risings of the people" of the port cities, the resistance of African-American slaves, and Indian struggles on the frontier.[4]

This continually reinvented force, in its unlikely "self-activation," "launched the age of revolution in the Atlantic." It "created breakthroughs in human praxis" and new modes of collective life within and against enclosure, settler colonialism, and slavery, the racial and heteropatriarchal capitalism they consolidated, and the modern state that administered and defended them.[5] While Linebaugh and Rediker describe the motley crew as

"a revolutionary subject," we might understand this disorderly assemblage, this expansive series of synchronicities, coordinated risings, and agglomerations, as ever "growing" into something less and, at the same time, more than this.

But what became of the motley crew? What was the fate of the breakthroughs it forged? Linebaugh and Rediker insist that the motley crew was defeated and its potential reemergence foreclosed for future generations by a mode of racialization that divided its various components. Those who had once worked alongside one another to defeat a common enemy began to be identified and to identify themselves through the separate, irreconcilable analytics of race and class. The eighteenth century, Linebaugh and Rediker argue, was "the very moment when the biological category of race was being formed and disseminated in Britain and America, and no less the moment of the formation of the political and economic category of class." As a result, "organizations [focused on workers' rights] would eventually make their peace with the nation, as the working class became national, *English*. With the rise of pan-Africanism, the people in diaspora became a noble *race* in exile."[6] Englishness (or inclusion in any other national formation) secured citizenship, a place within the modern nation-state as a member of its legitimate (white) working class. Through racialization, however, "blackness," disparaged and criminalized, was understood to be fundamentally alien and threatening to the modern nation and nation-state and necessarily excluded from citizenship. It would, in Linebaugh and Rediker's account, come to identify itself as an exile formation enclosed within the nation-state from which it was banned. The history of motley, transatlantic radicalism and its common idea, its "egalitarian multiethnic concept of humanity," would henceforth be obscured, as it was broken into a range of separate narratives organized around the newly consolidated opposition of (white) nation-state citizenship and unincorporable (however constantly accumulated) blackness.

I begin with Linebaugh and Rediker's memorialization of the motley crew because I want to reopen the question of its fate and futurity. I want to consider its modes of persistence and its modes of reproduction in ways that take into account gender and sexuality while resisting the ways these categories are usually aligned with productive and reproductive processes. It is in pursuing this question that I have become interested in the radical twentieth-century experiments of C. L. R. James and Hélio Oiticica.

I INVOKE AND introduce James and Oiticica, though my interest is not just in them; it is also in those experiments in which they were involved, experiments that they worked to formulate but that preceded and exceeded their formulation. I want to avoid reducing this study to an examination of the genius of two great men because their work depended on contact and collaboration with so many others, including those whose names are unrecorded and whose contributions are never fully acknowledged. To account for that interaction and collaboration, I describe their studies of but also within the modes of performativity that they encountered in cricket and samba and in the barrack yards of Port of Spain and the favelas of Rio de Janeiro, spaces they entered into in their early wanderings away from "home." I explore their efforts to appropriate what they found there, in ways that would seem to reenact the kinds of exploitation that are so fundamental to the functioning of racial capitalism, but also the ways in which the modes of performativity they tried to grasp worked in and through their works, appropriating and using those works as media for their own expression, erupting into and disrupting James's and Oiticica's intellectual itineraries. Perhaps the best way to attempt this is to trace the contact that effects that rerouting, beginning with James's and Oiticica's early excursions and into spaces where their already given nonbelonging seemed more pronounced. But first we must understand something about their respective situations at "home" and in exile. In accounting for their respective histories, I draw on James's and Oiticica's own complex narration and renarration of their itineraries, even when they cannot be given the last word. I draw also on many other studies of James and Oiticica that explore in much greater depth the specific national and regional contexts or intellectual fields within which James and Oiticica first worked. Insofar as I depart from those studies, it is, again, not in the interest of disregarding or dismissing them but in the interest of making a different kind of argument. What I offer is not a proper history of James or Oiticica or Trinidadian or Brazilian national culture or even the motley crew as a more perfect historical subject but an improper history, an account of the "something more" that the coincidences, resonances, and commonalities between them might amount to or enable.

CYRIL LIONEL ROBERT James (1901–1989) was a schoolteacher, writer, and political organizer. He was raised in the small town of Tunapuna, Trinidad,

when Trinidad was a crown colony of Great Britain. James grew up within a complex class and caste system, defined by both economic status and gradations of skin color, that structured the internal and external social relations of the colonized in early twentieth-century Trinidad. This system was the legacy of settler colonialism, the genocide and displacement of the indigenous Amerindians by the Spanish, the immigration, encouraged by the Spanish, of European Catholics, particularly French and free people of color, and the later population and administration of the island by the British, to whom the island was ceded in 1797. This colonial settlement was accompanied by the importation of large numbers of Africans during the slave trade and, after abolition, of indentured laborers, first from China, West Africa, and the Portuguese island of Madeira but then, in larger numbers, from India, to sustain the economic structures that had been established, primarily in connection with the sugar plantation system.

Though James himself was dark skinned, his grandfathers' positions as skilled laborers (one of his grandfathers worked as a "pan boiler" on a sugar plantation, a position usually held by white men, and the other was the first black engine driver on the Trinidad Government Railway) and his father's position as a schoolteacher endowed him with middle-class status. This status was a precarious one, however, maintained through a carefully managed "respectability," modeled on the puritanical morals imposed by the British. It was always in danger of being brought down by an unavoidable and, again, imposed proximity with the lowly morals associated with Afro- and Indo-diasporic colonial sociality. James was taught, for this reason, to wear his respectability as "armour"[7] and to keep his distance from the calypso tents and other popular pleasures in which a potentially "engulfing" low morality was gathered and performed.

James devoted himself, instead, to cricket, imported to the island in an effort to "civilize" the local population by imposing on them the code of bourgeois British values that had come to define the sport. His love of the game was rooted, he later recalled,[8] in the way it was played by two black players, the workman-like Arthur Jones, whose brilliant play was embellished by his trademark white hat, and the unruly Matthew Bondman, whose career was cut short by his inability or unwillingness to conform to the basic propriety demanded by the "code" of the game.

James also immersed himself in British literature, particularly the works of William Makepeace Thackeray, whose characteristically restrained

characters and prose, embodiments of "Puritanism incarnate," he especially admired. He discovered Thackeray's *Vanity Fair* in his mother's collection (from which he frequently drew) and returned to it again and again throughout his childhood. Through his reading, as he later recalled, he had already become a British intellectual.[9]

James won a place at Queens Royal College, the most prestigious secondary school in Trinidad, from which, despite the distractions of cricket and literature, he managed to graduate. Upon completion of his education, James, like his father, became a schoolteacher. He married his first wife, Juanita Samuel Young, but this relationship did not survive the transformations that James's career later underwent and when James left to pursue his career in exile, she remained behind. James also worked as a part-time cricket reporter for a local newspaper and continued to play cricket as a member of a local club. The sport brought him into contact with the wider world of Trinidad, beyond school and beyond the boundaries of the world that had been so carefully delineated for him by his family's respectability. It also precipitated his first great moral crisis, which came when he had to choose which club he was to associate himself with. Each club was linked to a specific social caste defined by economic status and color. Though he was dark skinned, James's education earned him an invitation not only to the black working-class Shannon club but also to the lighter-skinned professional-class Maple club. He accepted Maple's invitation but sought to rectify what he later came to recognize as a great mistake through his relationships with other players, including the great Shannon cricketer Learie Constantine. Collaborating with Constantine in the writing of Constantine's autobiography, *Cricket and I*, led James to begin to question his faith in the supremacy of British values.

In addition to cricket, James intensified his own literary studies and decided to pursue a career as a fiction writer. Working together with other nonwhite intellectuals, he helped form a literary association for nonwhites called the Maverick Club. He edited, with fellow club member Alfred Mendes, the short-lived literary magazine *Trinidad* and contributed to its successor, edited by Albert Gomes, the *Beacon*, which featured literature and lively political debate.[10] Through these entities, he worked to build a new literary scene in Trinidad, advancing new approaches to literature, linking those approaches to political debates, and building an audience that would engage this emergent intellectual and political formation.

James developed his own particular approach to literature through his visits to and conversations with people in the slum-like barrack yards of Trinidad's capital, Port of Spain. His writing took the form of realist renditions, including frank representations of sexuality and violence, unrestrained by puritan moralizing, of the social life and expressive practices of its residents. Reactions to this work were mixed in Trinidad, with one story in particular provoking strong reactions from middle-class readers, and James recognized that there were clear limits to what he, as a black man, could do and say in Trinidad. He had had a story published in the British *Saturday Evening Review*, however, which was republished in the collection *Best Short Stories*. So he decided to migrate to England to pursue his literary career, departing in 1932.

In England, James was supported by Constantine, who had come to play cricket there, and by his own part-time work as a cricket reporter for several British newspapers, and his interests began to shift from literature to politics. He published *Minty Alley*, the novel he had written in Trinidad, but his future pursuits were more accurately foreshadowed by the publication of "The Case for West-Indian Self Government,"[11] an abridged version of another text he had written before leaving Trinidad, a biography of the Trinidadian politician Arthur A. Cipriani, self-proclaimed representative of the black masses and champion of the "barefoot man." James became a key figure in the Pan-Africanist movement, working alongside fellow Trinidadian George Padmore, Amy Ashwood Garvey, Jomo Kenyatta, R. Ras Makonnen, I. T. A. Wallace-Johnson, among others, to aid Abyssinian resistance to Italian fascist aggression, along with other anticolonial independence movements in Africa, and to develop international, antiracist coalitions, first in the International African Friends of Abyssinia organizations and later in the International African Service Bureau. At the same time, James continued to write, producing a groundbreaking account of the Haitian Revolution and its relation to the French Revolution, in *The Black Jacobins: Toussaint L'Ouverture and the San Domingo Revolution*.[12]

In England, James also discovered Marxism. Having met a number of working-class radicals through Learie Constantine and his wife, Norma, he was drawn into the world of revolutionary politics, joining a discussion group and eventually allying himself with the Trotskyites as he worked within and then in opposition to the Independent Labour Party. In 1938, he was invited to come to the United States as a speaker. Initially intending

to stay only in the months between cricket seasons, James was asked by Trotsky to advise the Trotskyite Socialist Workers Party on the "Negro question" and ended up staying in the United States well beyond the time allowed by his travel visa. After his visa expired, he went into what he called "retirement," living and working more or less underground until he left in 1953.

As an active member of the Trotskyite movement, James was involved in many internecine party struggles and splits in the United States, forging with key collaborators Raya Dunayevskaya, Grace Lee, Lyman and Freddy Paine, Martin Glaberman, and many others, (including Constance Webb, who was to become James's second wife, and Selma James, who was to become James's third wife), an independent faction, called the "Johnson-Forest Tendency," within the Trotskyite movement. James and his cohort reinvented Western Marxism, translating largely unknown texts of Marx, offering early critiques of Soviet political repression and "state capitalism," and valorizing autonomous African American political insurgency as a crucial revolutionary force. Eventually abandoning Trotskyism and the idea of a vanguard political party altogether, the Johnson-Forest Tendency withdrew from party politics and reestablished itself as an independent organization, the Correspondence Publishing Committee, with an organ, the *Correspondence* newspaper, dedicated to supporting the radical activities not only of African American people but also of women, youth, and rank-and-file workers, including those engaged in unsanctioned and illegal strike activities. Members searched for signs of a more general social movement in the activities of these groups and in what they called "workers' culture." They reported those signs in the pages of *Correspondence*, and they attempted to articulate and develop their theories about this movement's potential impact in what was later published, under James's name, as *American Civilization*.

Although James married Webb, a U.S. citizen, he was harassed by the Federal Bureau of Investigation, eventually arrested by the Immigration and Naturalization Service, detained at Ellis Island, and forced to depart under the dictates of the 1952 McCarran-Walter Act, which empowered the U.S. government to deport any otherwise legal immigrant deemed, as James had been deemed, a "subversive." He traveled first to England, where he tried, with great difficulty, to maintain his involvement with the Correspondence group and where he began to expand on the links he had

been making between popular art and politics in his semiautobiographical account of Trinidadian cricket, *Beyond a Boundary*.

After James rededicated himself to Pan-Africanist politics in England, in 1958, he returned to Trinidad, where he played a central role, as editor of the organ for the People's Nationalist Movement party and adviser to its leader, his former pupil Eric Williams, in the formation of the new postcolonial state. But even back at home in Trinidad, James remained "unfit" for citizenship. Finding himself at odds with Williams, James left again for England. When he returned to Trinidad in 1965, as a reporter, to cover a cricket match, he was placed under house arrest by the very state he helped found, at least in part because he was considered a liability in the context of its evolving relationship with the United States. Later in 1965, James helped form the multiracial Workers and Farmers Party, under whose auspices he ran a spectacularly unsuccessful campaign for office, earning only 2.8 percent of the votes in his own small hometown of Tunapuna. After this defeat, James returned to Britain. In 1968, he was permitted to return to the United States, where he resumed his old work as a teacher, lecturing on black studies at Federal City College in Washington, DC. In 1980, he returned, finally, to England, where he spent his last days working on an autobiography that remained unfinished at his death.

Hélio Oiticica (1937–1980) was a visual artist, art teacher, writer, and counterculturalist who grew up in Rio de Janeiro. His early life in Brazil was bracketed by the military coups of 1930 and 1964. The social landscape of Brazil was shaped by settler colonialism and the ongoing genocide and displacement of indigenous Amerindians by Portuguese settlers. It was also shaped by the ongoing importation of large numbers of Africans during the slave trade, which continued in Brazil even after the slave trade was legally abolished, and by the exploitation of slave labor, which lasted longer in Brazil than anywhere else in the Americas. It was shaped, as well, by official policies encouraging immigration by Europeans after slavery finally ended. While the national ideology of "racial democracy" claimed that Brazil's "unique" history of miscegenation had led to the absorption of the best elements of indigenous and African culture by European culture and had achieved, through a general whitening on the one hand and an enhancement of whiteness on the other, a situation of harmony, free of racial conflict, Oiticica witnessed the persistence of racism and its effects.

Oiticica was born into a white, wealthy family whose members were respected intellectuals. His grandfather was a philologist. His father was an entomologist whose studies of butterflies led him to pursue scientific photography and, by extension, art photography. An active member of the Photoclub movement, his father became one of the most important modern photographers in Brazil. His father was also recognized for his scientific work and was awarded a Guggenheim Fellowship to conduct scientific research at the Smithsonian Museum in Washington, DC, where he lived, with his family, from 1947 to 1950.

Apart from this visit to the United States, Oiticica lived in the segregated Zona Sul or southern area of Rio. There Oiticica lived a relatively secure bourgeois existence, but "the bourgeois conditioning to which he was submitted,"[13] as he put it, was already partially undermined by the anarchism that permeated his family. Oiticica's grandfather was an anarchist. He founded and edited an anarchist journal called *Ação direta* (Direct action) and spent a great deal of his life imprisoned for his alleged involvement in insurgent activities and for his antistate views.[14] Oiticica's father did not openly challenge the law but raised his children according to anarchist principles. He refused to submit them to state schooling and, with the help of Oiticica's mother, educated them at home. Apart from the time Oiticica spent in the United States as a child, he did not receive any formal instruction until age sixteen, when he and one of his brothers, César, began attending an art class offered by the painter Ivan Serpa at the Museum of Modern Art in Rio. Working with Serpa and others, Oiticica organized an art institute for children where he himself also taught.

Through Serpa and the people Oiticica met at Serpa's studio—including the artists Lygia Clark, Lygia Pape, Aluísio Carvão, Weissmann, and Abraham Palatnik, the critic Mário Pedrosa, and the critic and poet Ferreira Gullar—he became involved in and affiliated with several avant-garde movements in Rio de Janeiro. He was invited by Serpa to participate in the Grupo Frente and then by Lygia Clark and Ferreira Gullar to join the Neoconcrete Group. The exhibitions of these groups at the newly established Museum of Modern Art in Rio de Janeiro helped solidify a new modern art scene in the city. Oiticica also developed strong ties to many of the concrete poets of the Noigrandes group and, later, the popular musicians and

writers linked to the Tropicália movement, whose name came from one of Oiticica's own works.

Oiticica understood himself to be working within the tradition of the European avant-garde, and his early, geometric paintings were influenced by artists and aesthetic theorists such as Paul Klee, Kazimir Malevich, and, most importantly, Piet Mondrian, "constructors," he said, "of the end of the figure and the frame—and the beginning of something new."[15] After 1959, Oiticica, too, began to move beyond the figure and the frame, projecting color into the world and inviting the viewer to enter and explore the new "color-structures" he developed. In his *Nuclei* series, color was applied to painted panels that were suspended from the ceiling across various planes so that openings were created for the spectator to pass through. The *Penetrables* were enclosures in which the spectator could linger. The *Bólides* (Fireballs) were smaller-scale "structures for inspection," including boxes with painted panels that could be manipulated and transparent glass containers filled with pure pigment and other materials that spectators could access and touch.

In 1964, Oiticica's work changed again after he began to study samba. He went to the Morro de Mangueira, a favela in Rio de Janeiro's Zona Norte, to assist the sculptors Amílcar de Castro and Fernando Jackson Ribeiro, who had been hired by members of the samba guild or "school" associated with the favela, to help create floats for its upcoming Carnival procession. Oiticica was drawn into the rehearsals he observed and dedicated himself to the school's activities and curriculum. Wanting to become more than just another crazy "Copacabana boy" who danced without regard for the rigors of the form, he hired the famous *passista* Miro to come to his home and teach him. He eventually became a *passista* himself, joining the procession at Carnival. Oiticica also spent a great deal of time in the favela itself, studying its architecture and entering into its social life. That included an exploration of some of the more illicit aspects of life in the favela in the 1960s.[16] Oiticica met outlaws and *malandros* (the con men and petty thieves celebrated in many samba lyrics), experimented with marijuana, and pursued his homosexual desires. He developed lasting friendships with many people in Mangueira, including Miro, Nildo, Jerônimo, Mosquito, Rose, Maria Helena, and others, whom he frequently visited and invited to his home.

Oiticica called the series of works that emerged at the time of these new associations *Parangolé*. In the *Parangolé*, he continued his explorations of "color-structure in space" at various scales with objects resembling banners, tents, and capes, but the true form of these structures would only be revealed by the action of the spectator who carried, wore, and inhabited these objects. Oiticica hoped to invite a dance-like interaction between spectator and object, one that would approximate what he had experienced. But when he invited his friends and fellow *sambistas* to "inaugurate" the *Parangolé* at the *Opinão 65* exhibition at the Museum of Modern Art in Rio, taking his work well beyond the parameters of what was recognizable as modern art in Brazil, museum officials refused to let them in.

Oiticica worked with many artists in the art scenes of Rio de Janeiro, participating in major group shows such as *Nova Objetividade Brasileiro* (New Brazilian objectivity) at the Museum of Modern Art and MAM in Rio de Janeiro in 1967, where he exhibited *Tropicália*, one of his most well-known works, and informal collective performances such as *Apocalipopótese* in the Atero do Flamengo park in 1968. Oiticica also publicly allied himself with those considered "marginal" at the inauguration of the *Parangolé* and other events, most notoriously at a large concert featuring the popular musicians Caetano Veloso and Gilberto Gil. On that occasion, he displayed a controversial banner. The concert was shut down, and Veloso and Gil were arrested. Under the increasingly repressive conditions of the dictatorship, Oiticica too was in danger of being censored or detained. After his home was searched by police, and other friends, from both the art world and the favelas, began to be arrested or killed, Oiticica recognized that he could no longer live and work as he wished in Brazil.

Oiticica went first to England. Having already exhibited at the Signals Gallery in London, he went back in 1968, to set up an exhibition, completed in 1969, called *The Whitechapel Experience*. It included a new installation, *Eden*, which combined new iterations of many of the forms he had been working with in a new form, the *Ninho* (Nest), to explore, on a larger scale, the possibilities of stimulating new unconditioned forms of behavior through sensory or what he called *Supra-sensorial* stimulation and *Crelazer* (Creleisure), or creative leisure, a concentrated leisure whose pleasures would themselves be productive. He also began to formulate, in or as what he called *Barracão*, the idea of a community engaged in the collective

project of inventing new ways of living, which he pursued through new Nests built while in residence at Sussex University in 1969[17] and through his contribution to *Information*, the epochal international group show at the Museum of Modern Art in New York (MoMA) in 1970 that first introduced him to U.S. audiences.

After returning to Brazil, Oiticica applied for and was awarded a Guggenheim Fellowship that allowed him to move to New York City at the end of 1970. He remained in New York after his visa expired, working nights at a translation agency while also participating in the countercultural life of Greenwich Village, moving through the loft scene, the queer cultural and sexual undergrounds, and the rock-and-roll and drug scenes. In his two downtown apartments—one he called "Loft 4," on Second Avenue, where he lived from 1970 to 1974, and another on Christopher Street, where he lived from 1974 to 1978—he reused the materials from the Nests at MoMA to build and rebuild new ones. *Babylônests* (Babylon being one of the terms he used to describe New York) and then *Hendrixsts* (inspired by the music of Jimi Hendrix) were gathering places for Oiticica and his friends and collaborators and, at the same time, key laboratories and alternative "exhibition" spaces for new projects. Within the Nests, Oiticica produced a number of proposals or works on paper, some of which he tested in the streets of New York, some of which he sent back to Brazil, and some of which lay in wait for the opportunity to be performed. He intended to compile and publish them in a large volume he referred to as *Newyorkaises*

Oiticica tried to renew his visa but was forced to leave the country after police, who had surveilled and interrogated him regarding his possible connection to the alleged drug trafficking of one of his friends, discovered his homosexuality. He returned to Rio de Janeiro in 1978 just prior to the *abertura*, or opening, in 1979, when rights previously abrogated during the dictatorship began to be restored. In Rio de Janeiro, he reestablished ties with old friends, appearing with many of them in *HO*, a film made by his friend Ivan Cardoso about him and his work. Many of his friends from the favelas, however, had been murdered by police death squads, and many of the favelas had been razed. He continued to develop new projects in Rio de Janeiro, in the streets and in the Morro de Mangueira, appropriating found objects, staging performances, and creating proposals for new spaces to be established within them, but his work was cut short when he died suddenly from a stroke in 1980 at the age of forty-three.

By most disciplinary standards, there is no proper basis for positing a relation between James and Oiticica or their oeuvres. Given the many differences between them, this is surely an unlikely combination. However, it is only through such unlikely combination that it becomes possible to recover and begin to understand the activities of a scattered and discontinuous underground formation that does not always materialize in conventional evidence accessible to conventional modes of study. James and Oiticica are experimentalists, and the full implications of their experimental practices can be approached only by way of an experimental practice, one that attempts, in linking them, to render what Raymond Williams thinks of as the feeling of a structure.[18] Recognizing their similarities, in the interest of eliciting that feeling and discerning that structure, does not require any elision of their significant differences. However, in thinking the differences between them, I do not want to extend the reification of the now naturalized and regulatory conceptions of difference that Linebaugh and Rediker point to as the limit of the motley crew and that also ultimately constitute a limit to their analysis. The differences I would like to foreground here, then, are not that set of already given differences that both James and Oiticica themselves theorize and attempt to disrupt in their intellectual and social practices. The differences at issue here are not those that separate them but those that structure and animate the sociality they each engage, enter into, and valorize in resistance to the mythologization and violent reinforcement of "the given." Alternative theorizations and inhabitations of difference are the very field in which their similarities become apparent.

To focus, moreover, merely on the similarities and differences between these two figures is to reduce their experimental encounter to an analysis of two great men and their great works and to ignore what it is in these works that resists the very notion of authorship on which this idea of greatness is founded. Though I refer, throughout this project, to James and Oiticica as the objects of my inquiry, I hope to offer a more expansive way of understanding the intellectual and aesthetic work that is associated with their names. For if the fundamental theoretical thrust of the experiments in which James and Oiticica and their collaborators were engaged was to contest the very categories of belonging that most scholars turn to in trying to understand their work—national and racial categories in particular and their heteropatriarchal structuring—what new theoretical possibilities emerge when we traverse these categories in the interest of imagining

or inventing other kinds of belonging and other modes of sociality, association, or accompaniment? James and Oiticica were each attuned to the ubiquitous modes of contact that are often overlooked in or dismissed by prevailing forms of regulation. What they embraced in their own creative undertakings was the complexity and generativity of such contact, its tensions and its pleasures. In linking James, Oiticica, and the projects in which they were engaged, I am attempting to establish—or rather reestablish by making apparent—precisely the kind of contact they valorized in order to explore what it might yield. Such methodological maneuvers, which are modeled on what they attempt to understand, are not just James's and Oiticica's. They are the maneuvers of the motley assemblages they study and join, the ones that carry forward the kinds of insurgent connection and cooperation that Linebaugh and Rediker believe have disappeared.

Linebaugh and Rediker point out the difficulty of their attempt to recover the lost history of the "multiethnic class" that forged the motley crew, arguing, "The historic invisibility of many of [*The Many-Headed Hydra*'s] subjects owes much to the repression originally visited upon them: the violence of the stake, the chopping block, the gallows, and the shackles of a ship's dark hold. It also owes much to the violence of abstraction in the writing of history."[19] But what if Linebaugh and Rediker remain bound by certain conventional abstractions in the writing of history that make them unable to see that which James and Oiticica, in their earliest investigations, saw and, through their theoretical accounts, enable us to see: that the insurgent desires of the motley crew and the insurgent "experiments in human praxis" that compose it have been continuously maintained and extended?

As whiteness became accepted as the limit of citizenship in the political economy of the new world and as the intersection of disciplinary brutality and antidisciplinary insurgency came to define Afro-diasporic life, the qualities that Linebaugh and Rediker associate with the motley crew were submitted to a racialized confinement whose terms and limits are nevertheless regularly transgressed. In this new social life, the motley crew persists, after the fact and against the grain of the rigid racialization that Linebaugh and Rediker describe, in and as the aesthetic sociality of blackness.

James and Oiticica both witnessed the ongoing renewal and reconfiguration of the motley crew. They found it first in the Americas, in the black

popular arts in Trinidad and Brazil and in the social life that always was and still remains off the grid, mobile and in hiding, in spaces such as the barrack yards of Port of Spain and the favelas of Rio de Janeiro, to which those arts give more formal expression. This social life absorbs and harbors what is understood to be opposed to and excluded from citizenship and the antisocial, heteropatriarchal forms of sociality that citizenship sanctions and regulates; this social life, this seemingly impossible social formation, in which sensual pleasure is liberty's indispensable precursor, in which aesthetic and social desire are intertwined, is the refuge of the motley crew.

In the context of the privatization of the commons, which operated in concert with transatlantic circuits of conquest expropriation and enslavement, contact becomes the new basis for common life. Contact between "sailors, pilots, felons, lovers, translators, musicians, mobile workers of all kinds" who "made new and unexpected connections, which variously appeared to be accidental, contingent, transient, even miraculous," is, Linebaugh and Rediker argue, essential to the formation of the motley crew.[20] It is what becomes both necessary and possible when communities are deliberately broken up and people are sent into exile, set adrift, and thrown together by expropriation, displacement, captivity, and fugitivity.

If the motley crew first developed out of contact in sites in which people were put to work, a contact based on the common predicament of labor "beneath the whip," it reconfigured and expanded itself by way of new encounters at the various crossroads of the new global order—the ships, the ports, the taverns, the prisons, the forests, and so on. When the categories of citizenship and the blackness that citizenship excluded were consolidated, the insurgent elements of the motley crew were rerouted into spaces such as the barrack yards and the favelas, where the excluded, the motley who become black, congregate. It is within these spaces—spaces that they assemble—that they reassemble themselves. They do so through the aesthetic sociality of blackness and the modes of composition, arrangement, and organization it invents and reinvents. Here, motleyness, or blackness, and its unruly expressions are contained (even as they also continually spill over into the city at large), subject to repression and outright eradication as these spaces are repossessed by and for the citizenry.[21] Here, what was motleyness is hidden and sheltered, even as racialization and criminalization remain in force and continue to expand. People come together here because they are black. But at the same time, they are black because

they come together here.[22] Their congregation is a necessity, for they often have nowhere else to go. This necessity, in which containment and refuge are combined, gives rise to creative practices that explore the radical possibilities of living otherwise.

The aesthetic sociality of blackness is an improvisational assemblage that resides in the heart of the polity while operating under its ground and on its edge. It develops by way of exclusion, but it is not exclusionary. And it extends itself through forms of association, affiliation, kinship, and reproduction that do not confine themselves to any norm. Though it draws on and carries forward what James Baldwin describes as an "unwritten, dispersed and violated inheritance,"[23] it is not a re-membering of something that was broken but an ever-expanding invention.[24] And though subject to a continuous and continuously legitimated exploitation, this exploitation is incomplete. Its resources, which can never be fully accessed by the structures and authorities of the legitimate political economy, are taken up by the politically and economically illegitimate in their insistence on finding ways to live otherwise, in ways that resist denigration and exploitation and the violence on which that exploitation depends. It is a mode of intellectuality that, in the face of the vicious constriction of life, assumes the widest possible range of expression—sensual, erotic, sometimes even violent. In pursuit of its own forms of pleasure or "happiness," it defies the laws of property and propriety.

What emerges from this aesthetic sociality, in the context of cricket and samba, for instance, as we will see, is a very different kind of work in which collectivity is not preestablished but develops out of cooperation, through what James calls "spontaneous self-discipline and cohesion"[25] and what Oiticica terms "anonymous collective genius."[26] The creative self-activity of the motley crew that Linebaugh and Rediker seek to understand and reveal is neither a lost relic nor a buried treasure, however much it could be said to have persisted underground. What Linebaugh and Rediker attempt to salvage shows up for James and Oiticica as lived and living experience.

If Linebaugh and Rediker are unable to see what James and Oiticica see, this is partly because they accept the supposed stability of the definition of blackness, failing to recognize that blackness, in its various complex appearances across the Atlantic, especially in the Americas, is always already motley, born in difference and displacement, always open to extension by way of infectious association, even as its limits are subject to strict

enforcement. If never fully "fluid, open, [or] ambiguous,"[27] as Linebaugh and Rediker suggest that blackness and racialization in general had once been, they are by no means now completely fixed. Between the absolute poles of fixity and fluidity lies a constitutive impurity whose sign shifts from blackness to motleyness, from motleyness to blackness, and back again. This impurity is a resource to be mined and a force to be regulated. It is the basis for the creative collective practices that are the focus of Linebaugh and Rediker's analytic attention, but in tracing it back to an originating imposition, they lose sight of its priority, presence, and futurity. While they are right to assert that the motley crew emerges prior to modern racialization, they are unable to see how modern racialization prepares and provides its refuge.

It may be that what makes the priority of motleyness and its persistence in and as blackness inaccessible to Linebaugh and Rediker is their inability to fully recognize the aesthetics of the motley crew's wide-ranging performativity. Insofar as they recognize that there might be an aesthetic aspect to the sociality of the motley crew, Linebaugh and Rediker find its expression in works by Milton, Shakespeare, and, in particular, Blake in figurations that offer a counterpoint to those that would render it as a monstrous menace. Such accounts offer aestheticized representations of the activities of the crew, but they do not account for the aesthetics that are intrinsic to those activities, the crew's own self-generated and generative aesthetics. Linebaugh and Rediker do allude, in passing, to the new and particular modes of sensual expression that come together at the level of the motley crew's speech. It would seem that the new Atlantic proletariat out of which the motley crew emerged did have a style: "It was *vulgar*. It spoke its own speech, with a distinctive pronunciation, lexicon, and grammar made up of slang, cant, jargon, and pidgin—talk from work, the street, the prison, the gang, and the dock."[28] But Linebaugh and Rediker do not investigate the particularities of this style's development and its extension, beyond speech, into other forms of expression. The distinctive style of this speech shows up for Linebaugh and Rediker as an incidental effect, rather than an integral element, of the motley crew's sociality, one inextricably bound to the motley crew's insurgent, even revolutionary political assertions. In failing to see the outlines of that broader, integrated practice whose elements James and Oiticica encountered and tried to extend in their own consciously aestheticized experimental practices, Linebaugh and Rediker

cannot fully attend to the essential matter of the *forms* of the cooperation and insurgency that they understand to be the fundamental "work" of the motley crew. This is not to suggest that Linebaugh and Rediker are wrong in their emphasis on the social and political nature of that work or that they are mistaken in their insistence on the way that work emerges from a resistant experience of work; it is, instead, my intention to multiply and further differentiate the concept of work along lines that are opened by James's and Oiticica's aesthetic sensibilities and practices.

The popular art forms through which James and Oiticica initially encountered the aesthetic sociality of blackness are cricket and samba: in particular, cricket as played by the black members of the striving lower-middle-class Shannon club and working-class Stingo club in Port of Spain in the context of British imperial rule, and samba as danced by the black working- and underclass members of the Estação Primeira de Mangueira samba school in Rio de Janeiro at the onset of the military dictatorship that lasted from 1964 to 1985. James's and Oiticica's respective analyses of cricket and samba are by no means exhaustive or definitive; rather, they are structured by their own particular pleasures and desires. Their explorations of cricket and samba, moreover, lead them beyond cricket and samba to an immersion in the more quotidian performative practices to which cricket and samba are linked, those that take shape in the barrack yards of Port of Spain and the favelas of Rio de Janeiro.

Cricket, James notes, developed among nonindustrial artisanal workers in Great Britain before its adoption by the British bourgeoisie as a vehicle for expressing and transmitting its values. These values were crystallized in an unwritten "code" of conduct, the moral framework understood by all who played the game. The game's introduction to the black population of Trinidad was, in part, an attempt to "civilize" that population and, at the same time, to demonstrate its relative incivility. What interests James, however, is the way cricket, when taken up by the black clubs, becomes a means not only to prove their capacity to perform British civility through a strict adherence to its code but also, as James later came to appreciate, to demonstrate their disregard for this code and the values it represents.

Samba, initially a criminalized and forcefully policed activity, drew on elements of various African expressive practices that survived the Middle Passage. It developed in the slave quarters, the houses of the *mães-de-santo*,

the favelas, and the streets of the city at large as it inserted itself into the Euro-Brazilian celebration of Carnival. Institutionalized through associations within the favelas—the guilds or "schools" that organized and formalized its performance, thereby elevating its status—samba was eventually embraced by commercial interests and the state itself as a symbol of Brazilian national culture. What interests Oiticica, however, is the way samba nevertheless continues to consolidate and at the same time innovate a distinct and dissident sociality simultaneously within and apart from Brazilian society.

As James looked back, many years later, on his early encounters with cricket, in his semiautobiographical account of cricket in Trinidad, *Beyond a Boundary*, he recalled that he initially thought of the game as only a pastime. As he later said, "If you had asked me then, or for many years afterwards, where cricket stood in my activities as a whole, I would have without hesitation placed it at the bottom of the list, if I had listed it at all. . . . Its physical and moral value concerned me not at all."[29] James's sense of cricket's value was limited by its situation outside and below his intellectual pursuits, while Oiticica's original attraction to samba, as he recounted in a diary entry in 1965, came from "a vital necessity for disintellectualization" or at least an "intellectual disinhibition."[30] What they each came to find, however, was that cricket and samba are deeply intellectual practices, though of a very different kind than those they had initially pursued through literature and painting. They materialize in social structures that produce and are defined by the movement of bodies that bear a long legacy of expropriation, displacement, and confinement, bodies—or rather "nobodies" or "flesh"[31]—in exile.

But what is the nature of these social structures? And what aesthetic forms do they assume? Both James and Oiticica were struck by the nonmetaphysical or nontranscendental nature of the performative acts in and through which they are constituted and asserted. James described cricket as both "elemental physical action" and expressive act, while "Dionysian dance," as Oiticica refers to it, "is the actual aesthetic act in its raw state."[32] "Cricket," James agues, "does not allow the representation of specific relations as can be done by a play or even by ballet and dance. The players are always players trafficking in the elemental human activities, qualities and emotions."[33] "Dionysian dance" is, in Oiticica's account, "the search for a direct expressive act; it is the immanence of the act,"[34] and, as such,

it operates very differently than dance such as ballet whose choreography seeks to "transcend" the act.

James and Oiticica were attracted, furthermore, to the dynamic nature of these acts and the kinds of images they produce, which are not reducible to the images found in European aesthetics. James writes about the aesthetic or "the style that is common to the manifold motions of the great players, or most of them," which he defines as the "perfect flow of motion,"[35] arguing that its form cannot be captured and fixed by literary or visual illustration. Instead, through repetition, "the spectator sees the image constantly re-created" and ultimately becomes part of that re-creation insofar as this motion is "repeated often enough to become a permanent possession of the spectator which he can renew at will."[36] And while the performance of samba generates images, its images are, Oiticica writes, "mobile, rapid, inapprehensible—they are the opposite of the static icon that is characteristic of the so-called fine arts."[37] The immersion into rhythm that the flow of motion in samba enables creates a "new discovery of the image" and, by extension, "a recreation of the image."[38] As careful observers who became dedicated students and competent practitioners, James and Oiticica themselves both explore the expressive possibilities of these acts. But, again, the specific realization of these possibilities in the performative styles they encountered among lower-middle-class, working-class, and underclass black players and dancers is what they valorize most.

Essential to both thinkers is the fact that these acts are the products of ongoing innovation through improvisation. As James says of the play of Wilton St. Hill, which he raises to the level of an ideal, "if to remain on the go required the invention of a stroke on the spot, invented it would be."[39] James recalls a game in which Learie Constantine makes an unprecedented play: "He had never in his life made such a stroke before, . . . and he had no premeditated idea of making any such stroke. I do not remember seeing it again. He went in, there was the ball, and on the spur of the moment he responded."[40] As Oiticica remarks, in dance such as samba, "improvisation reigns, as opposed to organized choreography; in fact the freer the improvisation the better."[41] Samba suggests, Oiticica proposes, "what creation through the corporeal act may be, a continuous transformability."[42] What is revealed in such improvisation is what James later came to call the "creative capacity" and Oiticica began to call the "creative activity" of the collectives that form in and through it.

But just as essential for both James and Oiticica is the fact that these acts emerge within the context of cooperation. Cricket and samba are composed in the interplay of moving bodies and performative styles. For James, the collective nature of these performances is immediately evident in the "spontaneous self-discipline and cohesion"[43] that manifests itself in the coordinated acts of players who do not appear to need to be led or told what to do. The Shannon captain "no more captained W. St. Hill than the Stingo captain did [George] John."[44] Oiticica contends that "in the Samba Schools, no one knows who did this or that; what is important is the whole in which everyone gives everything he can."[45] This is the "anonymous collective genius" within which the distinction between the individual and the collective breaks down, in which "in fact . . . one cannot establish a distinction between the collective and the individual."[46]

James insists that cricket offers an ideal, an opportunity to "grasp" at "a more complete existence."[47] Early on, he finds such an opportunity in the ability of the striving lower-middle-class members of the Shannon club, such as his friend Learie Constantine, to demonstrate perfect compliance with the code of behavior that the British used to distinguish the civilized from the uncivilized. This performance of civility, along with the players' exceptional skill, their capacity to defeat the British ("their bowling and fielding would have made shambles of most English counties then or now"),[48] was proof of their capacity for respectability on British terms—and not just their own respectability, James insists, for "they played as if they knew their club represented the great mass of black people in the island."[49] James later recognized as more radical, however, the play of Stingo players such as George John, who "incarnated the plebs of his time, their complete independence from the values and aspirations that competed in the spheres above,"[50] and who did not care what his performances did or did not imply but reveled only in the pleasure of playing well. As James notes, "He was not Shannon. A sense of injustice, the desire to prove, was not evident in John at all. He was above that or below it. Yet in his utter rejection of all standards and interests except his own I see his fast bowling as stoked by more dynamite than there was in all the Shannon eleven put together."[51] Though the tension between these two ideals persists across James's work, what James valorizes here is the insistent and defiant disregard for the code that John's explosive style enacts.

Oiticica experiences something like this grasping in samba. As "a total act of life, irreversible," a "total act of being," it also enacts an ideal. The breakdown in the distinction between individual and collective expression in the "flux" that samba's complex rhythm produces creates a sense of social dislocation, "an unbalance for the equilibrium of being." It initiates the dissolution of Oiticica's own prior identity and identifications, his sense of belonging to "a particular social layer or 'elite.'" If this dislocation inspires "the will for an integral position, social in its most noble meaning, free, total," whose counterpart is the pleasure or "happiness in the body" that he finds in samba as danced by the people he meets in Mangueira, that integration would begin with a "fundamental" identification with marginality.[52]

James and Oiticica both also note the indiscretion of the performative practices that make up cricket and samba. Cricket, James observes, extends well beyond the international Test matches at Port of Spain's Queens Park Savannah (which are themselves already diffused by their sheer length, by the fact that they go on for days) to the practice sessions that are as avidly watched as the matches and in the pickup games in which the distinction between player and fan breaks down. The spectator who can recall and "renew" a great play "at will" can also perform it. Similarly, as Oiticica notes in his diary entries, samba can be danced at any gathering by anyone who knows the form. Samba bespeaks a generalized practice, a dispersion of the singular event into a series of small acts and everyday rehearsals that are both repeated and newly invented on each occasion. It is not just the spectacular Carnival procession that is samba. "The rehearsal for the samba," as he writes in later notes, "already is samba."[53] The performance of cricket and samba is, furthermore, integrated into the daily life of the neighborhoods with which the players and dancers and their most ardent audiences are associated. Drawn into cricket and samba, James and Oiticica were drawn into these neighborhoods as well. When structures of bodily movement that can be raised to the level of ceremony and spectacle are given in their everyday forms, they make the broad range of informal quotidian practices that articulate the social life of these spaces more apparent. These are the "styles" in and through which people, in the most difficult of conditions, both survive and seek pleasure, together. Life in the barrack yard is cricket's domestic counterpart. Life in the favela is samba's uncontained extension.

The barrack yards and favelas are essentially shantytowns or slums structured, in Trinidad, around barrack ranges, similar to the kinds used to house slaves and later indentured laborers on plantations, or in Brazil, around improvised shelters called *barracos* or *barrações*. In that these "substandard" spaces, often without the kinds of divisions within or between them that would secure separate, private individual life or normative bourgeois family arrangements, are populated primarily by black people, they constitute what Saidiya V. Hartman might call the architectural afterlife of the slave quarters.[54] But to say this is also to say that these spaces recall the spaces that formed in resistance to slavery insofar as the development of the very idea of *marronage* has to pass through the slave quarters. While Robert K. Home reminds us that the term "barrack" is etymologically linked to the word "barracoon," the name given for the structures used to hold slaves in transit during the slave trade,[55] Andrelino Campos links the criminalized favelas to the criminalized *quilombos* or communities formed by escaped slaves.[56] The creative inhabitation of the accretive and interpenetrating units that composed these spaces[57]—less "containers" than apparatuses for congregation and collaboration, at the edges and in the interstices of the polis that slavery had made possible—shelters and nurtures other forms of life. Though it is often by necessity and not choice, living in such spaces, at this slight remove, allows for the development of an alternative sociality structured by its own aesthetic acts and aesthetic judgments.

As Donald R. Hill notes in his account of the development of calypso in Trinidad, the barrack yards provided the communal context for the production of new expressive practices:

> After emancipation, many freed slaves moved from the plantation to town, augmented by migrants from other islands and by indentured Africans. These groups formed the core of the grass-roots urban Creoles. . . . The Creoles and Africans worked as domestics, porters and longshoremen or in the crafts. A number became an underclass—petty criminals, prostitutes, and vagrants. Many lived in barrack houses located out of the sight of the passerby behind or adjoining middle-class houses or street-fronted businesses. Barrack houses were cut out of a long shed that was attached to a back wall. The house's only door let out into a narrow yard that sometimes was bounded by another barrack range. Each apartment was about eleven feet square and was partitioned

> by a wooden wall that did not reach the ceiling. Each row had a single water tap and toilet. . . . Out of the squalor of the barrack yards a new, vibrant culture germinated.[58]

This new culture, Hill argues, was linked to another game of sticks, calinda,[59] and by way of calinda to calypso, which was everything that cricket, at least the cricket that strictly adhered to the code, was not. But this new "culture" also manifested itself in the styles of speech, comportment, gesture, and sexuality that James observed and the way they came together to express the sentiments of the various people of the yard, "their angers, their rages, their need for happiness."[60] Structurally parallel to Queens Park Savannah, the central yard adjoining the barrack ranges constituted a stage for these other kinds performances. James witnessed them in his frequent walks through the barrack yards and in his conversations with the residents there. As his biographer Paul Buhle recounts, "James knew the characters of his stories well from strolling the slums near his own dwellings." Interested in the way the people who lived there resisted not just wage labor but also the domestic arrangements that were bound to it, "He was known as 'a great man to listen' to all who chose to talk, about life and love."[61]

Like the barrack yards, the favelas, as Paola Berenstein Jacques argues in her analysis of their architecture, constitute a new territory in the spaces that have been emptied by the displacements required for settler colonialism, the containment of slaves, and capitalist development:

> The thicket that we find in the wasteland of the city makes up a part of the favelas of Rio, the majority of which sprout in abandoned lots of the city, in all the spaces left empty by the "property machine," in places where construction would be impossible or too expensive: hills on escarpments, flooded sites, sites in judicial litigation, etc. The favelas already appear in almost all parts of the city, in unutilized public spaces: beneath bridges and viaducts, on the edge of canals, in certain streets, etc. The shelters emerge in the middle of the city, between conventional neighborhoods, exactly like the weed that grows between the rocks in the pavement or in the middle of the asphalt, forming enclaves, or micro-territories, in the interior of larger ones. The invasion of the vacant lot and its occupation by shelters forms a new territory in the city.[62]

Jacques locates the development of samba in the favelas, conjecturing that their improvised and irregular forms, their labyrinthine nature, may perhaps even contribute to shaping some of samba's specific movements:

> The *passistas* . . . seem to be inspired by the meandering space of the favela-labyrinth, as if they reproduced the movements of the body upon ascending the steep roads of the favela. The dance of samba would be in a mimetic relationship with the rhythm of the changes. Samba develops within the favelas, in the *morros* [hills], and is danced by the whole city in Carnival. During the march of the schools, the *passistas*, dressed up, approach the *Sambódromo* dancing in zigzag, as if in an imaginary labyrinth.
>
> Danced samba would be, therefore, a representation of the route of the favelas, the special labyrinthine expression that infects the movements of the body. Whoever dances the samba repeats the physical experience of wandering the meandering paths of the favelas; its confused space, difficult to learn, finds, in this way, its best representation.[63]

Oiticica experienced not only the samba that develops in the favela but other, criminalized activities that thrived in the opportunity for evasion and secrecy that these meandering pathways afforded: the swindling of the *malandros*, the flight of fugitives (such as the infamous bandit Manoel Moreira, known as Cara de Cavalo, whose "search for happiness" Oiticica paid tribute to in his work),[64] and use of marijuana and casual sexual—for Oiticica, homosexual—liaisons. He also appreciated the multilayered *barracos* that formed the pathways, the structural principles through which they were ingeniously built and extended, the way they organized space, reconfiguring the scene of domestic life, and the way they too could stimulate and shape new kinds of performances. Though Oiticica's experience of the favelas began in the *terreiro* of the samba school, it expanded considerably through the hospitality of his friends there, including the daughter of a member of the samba school, Rose Souza-Mattos. It was through gatherings at her residence that he began to linger in these spaces and enter into the social life of the favelas.[65]

The quotidian practices to which James and Oiticica were drawn in these spaces are directed toward survival without submission to the humiliating and restrictive structure of wage labor, which often replicated the conditions of slave labor or were inaccessible, anyway, to those who refused

them.[66] But these practices are not just about survival. They are also the self-conscious acts, in pursuit of pleasure and happiness, of the aesthetic sociality of blackness. They constitute an ongoing critical, inventive, and necessarily collective response to the oppressive conditions specific to the New World, an ongoing insistence on living otherwise. It is in the performances of cricket and samba and the forms of congregation and collaboration linked to them—but even more profoundly in the kinds of extramoral, extralegal expressive practices that disrupt and extend the formal, public, state-sanctioned performances of cricket and samba, in the fundamentally experimental aesthetic sociality that they articulate, and in their enactment of an ongoing resistance to oppressive regimes of work and static conceptions of the work—that James and Oiticica found the remnants of and the building blocks for the motley crew. And it is these practices and the cooperative, improvisatory modes of composition, arrangement, and organization in and through which they are formed that James and Oiticica sought to appropriate in their own aesthetic efforts. Each made a claim on the aesthetic sociality of blackness. But it, in turn, made its claims on them.

James's and Oiticica's claims on the aesthetic sociality of blackness emerged in and as self-consciously experimental undertakings. *Minty Alley*, written in 1929, is the barrack-yard novel that James composed as an experimental "exercise," not initially meant, he says, for any audience[67] but to prepare him for the magnum opus he intended to write later. *Parangolé* is the term Oiticica used to define a "a specifically experimental position."[68] It is the name he gave the new objects loosely resembling banners, tents, and later capes that he had begun to produce and the new types of experiences that he hoped they would stimulate, experiences that would enable what the Brazilian art critic Mário Pedrosa had called "the experimental exercise of freedom."[69] In that these experiments enact James's and Oiticica's claims on the aesthetic sociality that they "discovered," they necessarily entail a reformulation of James's and Oiticica's own authorship. Authorship emerges in these works as a complex relation between discovery and invention, finding and experimentation, taking and releasing, which is further complicated by the unruly operations of the aesthetic sociality of blackness itself.

In *Minty Alley*, James tells the fictional story of a motley crew of black people who assemble at No. 2 Minty Alley, a "simple" middle-class house that has been deformed by the appendage of two barrack-style rooms to let. James explores, imaginatively, the form of the collectivity that develops in this domestic space and the yard onto which it opens and in which many of the novel's most dramatic scenes unfold. The connections between those who come together here arise from their mutual dependence and are expressed as much through tension and discord as through harmony.

Though written in the third person, *Minty Alley* assumes the point of view of Mr. Haynes, a young, middle-class black man of James's social standing. Haynes is forced from the comforts of his middle-class home by his mother's untimely death. Unable to pay his mortgage, a fact that places his hopes for independence in jeopardy, he rents out his home and takes up residence, alongside the other lodgers, at No. 2, a household loosely headed by Mrs. Rouse. While at first Haynes isolates himself in his room, observing the goings-on in this household at a seemingly safe remove through a hole in the wall that he keeps hidden from the others, his private room proves to be wholly permeable. Inundated by the sights, sounds, and intense smells emanating from the kitchen, as well as the yard and the alley in which it is situated, and constantly visited by the expansive network of people who make up the household and traverse the yard, he is drawn into the social life of No. 2. Unsure about whether they are taking advantage of him even as he learns that his sustenance comes at the expense of theirs,[70] he is unable to maintain any illusion of separation.

This household is also a workplace where Mrs. Rouse and various others bake cakes to support themselves. Those who reside together at No. 2 are primarily women: Mrs. Rouse; her niece, Maisie; Wilhelmina and the East Indian Philomen, who work alongside Mrs. Rouse; and Mrs. Rouse's lodgers, Miss Atwell and the nurse. But there are many others who come and go, most notably Haynes but also Mrs. Rouse's unfaithful lover, Benoit, and others still whose traversal of this porous space and whose economic and affective entanglement with those who reside here more regularly (from Aucher, Mrs. Rouse's most reliable baker, who is frequently waylaid in jail, to Sugdeo, Philomen's lover, who sneaks in through the kitchen window for late-night trysts) is registered only in passing. The bulk of the story, however, is composed of the performances of the women, particularly their verbal performances. Much of the story in *Minty Alley*, far more than in

James's earlier fictional works, is rendered in dialogue form. James's otherwise dominant authorial voice, already submerged in and complicated by its affiliation with Haynes, is interrupted and trumped by the various speakers who intervene.

As Anna Grimshaw notes, James made use in his fiction of the stories he heard in his walks through the barrack yards. "A technique James used on more than one occasion," she writes, "was to re-work stories which he had heard or which had been told to him."[71] Pointing toward the specific instance of *Minty Alley*, Paul Buhle recounts that the character Mrs. Rouse was based on a woman James actually knew: "In the case of *Minty Alley*, Mrs. Rouse very much resembled a real-life Mrs. Roach, an uneducated but very proper landlady of his. Her brother, who somewhat resembled Benoit, was a gambling, guitar-playing rascal caught for keeping a brothel. Mrs. Roach, as James later related, had answered this threat to propriety with a stream of articulate invective that struck James as extremely poetic. He listened to her, amazed and impressed at her powers of speech."[72] If *Minty Alley* is rendered largely through the speech of its characters, Mrs. Rouse's speeches, which claim and relay both the propriety and the "articulate invective" of Mrs. Roach, bear much of the weight of this rendering.

The elaborate objects that were the starting point for the "color-structures," "environmental manifestations,"[73] or "magical lived experiences" that Oiticica called *Parangolé* were made of a wide range of fabrics (from canvas to tulle), vinyl, screens, paper, rope, and other inexpensive materials commonly in use in and around favelas in the 1960s. These materials were sewn together in unexpected ways to create banner-, tent-, and cape-like objects, of various textures, shapes, and sizes, sometimes appended with bags containing pigment or newspaper clippings or other items and in later iterations painted with poetic and political phrases. These objects were to be touched, entered, held, carried, and worn in whatever ways the spectator desired. They were to be activated and experienced corporeally and collectively, in ways that would approach the kind of dance that Oiticica had experienced through samba. Indeed, they recalled the elaborate kinds of adornment produced for Carnival, the flags, the floats, and the costumes that were so critical to each year's distinctive procession. These objects were, however, often multilayered, twisted, asymmetrical, unevenly weighted. In that the multiple openings and the wildly varying

widths, lengths, and weights of these objects' oddly assembled components suggested no simple or single manner for engagement, the form of the *Parangolé*, realized or "unveiled" through the action and pause of the spectator-turned-participator and extended through what Oiticica described as a "cycle" of acting and watching others act—which makes it simultaneously aesthetic and social—would necessarily be invented anew on each occasion.[74]

The structure of the *Parangolé*, Oiticica insists, is to be found not in the objects used to make them or the objects they resemble but in the form they assume through the action of the spectator. The *Parangolé* is "an exploration of the basic structural constitution of the world of objects, the search for the roots of the objective birth of the work."[75] More important, then, are the resonances between the "constructive principles" of the *Parangolé* and those Oiticica recognized in Carnival ornamentation and the architecture of other temporary or improvised environmental structures, including the dwellings or *barracos*, that form the favelas. Oiticica found the "structural organicity" of the *barracos*, built one on top of the other by the residents with the help of their neighbors, and their alternative configuration of domestic space exemplary in this respect. If, as Oiticica hoped, the not-yet-formed form of the *Parangolé* conditions the "unconditioning" of the spectator, through a process of wearing and watching that necessarily involves others, if the *Parangolé* makes an "interference" in the spectator's behavior and allows new aesthetic and social forms to emerge, the openness of the *barracos*, the "continuity" of their internal circulation, in which rooms are connected without abrupt separation or transition, and, at the same time, their external dismemberment, resulting perhaps from ongoing waves of building by multiple parties, set the scene for other ways of living.

The very term *Parangolé*, a slang term from the favelas that means, among other things, "hearsay, pack of lies, 'line,' fast talk," came initially from an improvised shelter that Oiticica encountered one day while walking to Mangueira.[76] Although he stressed in "Fundamental Bases for the Definition of the Parangolé," one of the two statements he distributed together in a pamphlet at the inauguration of the *Parangolé*, that the *Parangolé* was first and foremost an outgrowth of his previous aesthetic experiments, which were themselves rooted in the tradition of the European avant-garde art, in a supplementary note that he later appended, he recalled stumbling upon the term in this context:

> The use of the word "*Parangolé*" for these works is born from the discovery of it in a, if it can be said, "*Parangolé*-structure" in the urban landscape of Rio de Janeiro. This work was constituted of four pillars of wood tied up in a rectangle, and from one to the other, forming a virtual wall, parallel threads from top to bottom. In each thread fine pieces of plastic were tied in loops, of various colors. The spatial sense of the nucleus that possessed the work is indescribable. Beyond this, a piece of burlap dropped down from one of the stakes, forming a little tent (within which the author slept, as I verified later); on this burlap was written the word "*Parangolé*." Unfortunately I was not able to photograph the work due to an absolute lack of foresight that it would be so quickly broken down.[77]

Oiticica recognized in the pointed aestheticization of this rudimentary and tenuous shelter an improvised, very temporary home, centered around a carefully and elaborately adorned bed, not just a structural organicity but a style of creating "from adversity," one that he honored even more explicitly in a cape emblazoned with the phrase "FROM ADVERSITY WE LIVE" and extended through his ongoing elaborations of this open-ended "we." He also hoped that the creative perception stimulated by the "total-*Parangolé*-experience" would enable *Parangolé* participants themselves to go on to "find" these elements just as he had found them in the favelas and beyond, as they went on to explore "the multidimensional relationships that arise between 'perception' and productive 'imagination.'"[78]

Because James and Oiticica sought something in the ongoing history of blackness, in its affiliation with and extension of the motley crew's proletarian or underclass constitution and in the aesthetic and social forms that give expression to that affiliation and extension, and that they sought it in "impoverished" spaces where they themselves did not live or work, James's and Oiticica's own practices might be construed as a kind of "slumming," which could result only in exploitative appropriation. But what might be considered exploitative appropriation here is generally understood, with regard to the European intellectuals James and Oiticica studied (such as Thackeray and Marx or Mondrian and McLuhan), as influence. James and Oiticica understood the aesthetic sociality of blackness as a mode of intellectuality, the barrack yards and the favelas as places of study, the

members of the cricket clubs and samba schools among their most important instructors. In attempting to redeploy the forms through which that aesthetic sociality asserts itself, they attempted to avoid the moralizing or folkloricizing gestures that often obscure the intellectual force of those forms. More importantly, however, within their work, morality and folklore, as well as poverty itself, are redefined through the intellectual intervention of that which they would represent. For, again, while James and Oiticica made their claims on the aesthetic sociality of blackness, it made its claims on them, erupting in and through their work, appropriating their media and their authorship as its means of expression.

Something like a counterclaim can be registered in the way audiences are invited to play a role in shaping James's writing and Oiticica's art. This occurs not so much in James's fiction writing[79] but in his cricket writing. Always seeking to convey the passions of players and fans, giving expression to what he believed the public "wanted expressed" and highly aware that they were reading what he wrote, James occasionally supplemented and revised his work at the behest of these players and fans, reformulating his political opinions in response to criticism from Learie Constantine, for example, when collaborating with Constantine to produce Constantine's autobiography, *Cricket and I*, or even writing a sonnet about Wilton St. Hill, for example, after a fan who believed James had overlooked St. Hill's contribution to a game demanded a poetic tribute.[80] Something similar emerges in Oiticica's presentation of the *Parangolé* when spectators take up the *Parangolé* objects and move with them, becoming more than mere spectators of these objects. Oiticica intended for this to happen. It is built into the structure of the work, for the work depends on the participation of the spectator to complete it. But in these examples, the forms and the forms of authorship that James and Oiticica begin with are maintained. The counterclaim that the aesthetic sociality of blackness makes on James's and Oiticica's works manifests itself more fundamentally when the sociality they invoke disrupts the form of James's writing and Oiticica's art in ways they cannot fully anticipate or control—in ways that ultimately call into question the very idea of the work as they had previously understood or attempted to reimagine it.

This more fundamental counterclaim can be felt, in *Minty Alley*, in the disruptions that mark James's otherwise restrained and orderly syntax. The narration, though written in the third person, is linked to Haynes,

rendering his thoughts and experiences and assuming, through its elegant sentences, its euphemisms, and its measured tone, a posture of propriety that would be consonant with someone of Haynes's (and James's) middle-class standing, however precarious this standing is revealed to be.[81] It is redoubled and refracted, however, in all the sudden parentheticals that supplement and contradict it and in the unannounced shifting between the scene of its ostensible production and the other, otherwise unrendered scenes that this layering of accounts (many of which turn out to be untrue) enacts. And it is broken up by interjections for which it often seems totally unprepared. Though dominated by Haynes, the narrative is a collective endeavor, the product of many heads that Haynes and even James cannot seem to fully manage and whose tensions cannot fully be resolved. Indeed, in its shifting, proliferating polyphony, in the parenthetical insertions and interjections that both disrupt and drive the narration, it sometimes appears as if the regulatory power of the novel itself cannot manage its own ensemble. This occurs in passages such as these:

> She told him as easily as good morning that she had been engaged to be married to a doctor, who had seduced her and then deserted her. (But Ella said no: she had been wild from early, and Sonny was not her first-born.) (49)
>
> At five minutes to nine—court began at nine—those who were to be tried walked upstairs from the Marshall's room, a constable in front and one behind. Today the nurse, whose case came first, headed the procession. She came up the steps, "thin as a string and flat as a board" (Miss Atwell) and very pale; but she carried herself erect, and Haynes could not help admiring the courage with which she was at least beginning the day. (166)
>
> At first Mrs. Rouse didn't want to have anything to do with him, or, as Maisie said, "pretended" that she didn't. But later, they had made it up (Maisie had always been a shameless and adroit eavesdropper) and they used to meet and make love. (224)

A similar uncontainment is evident in the descriptions casually provided for so many of the characters. The almost excessively detailed renderings of each character's racial characteristics and insinuations regarding the histories of miscegenation and infectious association that likely produced them introduce still other scenes that cannot fully be managed in and by the

narrative. Mrs. Rouse's face is "a smooth light-brown with a fine aquiline nose and well-cut firm lips. The strain of white ancestry responsible for the nose was not recent, for her hair was coarse and essentially negroid" (26). Benoit's "very black" face is "undistinguished-looking, neither handsome nor ugly. The very dark skin and curly hair showed traces of Indian blood" (30).

What also emerges in these descriptions is something like a definition of blackness as fundamentally heterogeneous or motley, one in which mixture itself is incomplete and difference is neither subsumed nor sublated but preserved within and as a history that depends on conjecture. It is this blackness that binds everyone at No. 2. For though they all might insist, at one point or another, that they do not belong there among the others—"them people" (34), as Miss Atwell refers to them at a moment when she wishes to distinguish herself—each belongs by way of association. This comes across subtly but forcefully in the description of the redoubled "mark" that ancestry and life have left on the almost-white nurse. She is described as seemingly white: "She was to all appearances white, but the tell-tale finger-nails showed the colored blood." If she had had money, Haynes notes, "she would have been able to take her place with the white aristocracy, ninety-nine percent of whom had more coloured blood than she had" (30). And yet, while her deportment and speech suggest to Haynes a middle-class upbringing, it seems that "life had left its mark upon her, in her weather-beaten body and hard style as much as in the fact that she, a professional woman with so fair a skin, lived openly and without shame in the house of these lowly black folk" (48). The aesthetic sociality of blackness finds expression in a narrative that is produced by the interactions of an ensemble that Haynes only reluctantly enters into. Blackness binds them, creates a collective through them, but without resolving any of the tensions that arise within the context of this collective.

These tensions develop as various sexual couplings between members of the collective, particularly those between Benoit, Mrs. Rouses's unfaithful lover, and other women at No. 2, become apparent. When the relationship between Mrs. Rouse and Benoit breaks down and Benoit leaves the compound, eventually marrying the nurse, Mrs. Rouse becomes increasingly distraught.

The tensions within the collective surface most emphatically in the verbal interactions between Mrs. Rouse and Maisie. The story develops in

and as the interplay between the steady flow of Mrs. Rouse's ostentatiously proper speeches, through which she attempts to maintain the appearance of middle-class respectability even as her lover openly takes up with and ultimately leaves her for the nurse (attempting to take possession of the house in the process), and Maisie's outrageous lies, "barbed darts," and fits of laughter, all of which interrupt and unravel Mrs. Rouse's oratorical performance. If Mrs. Rouse's words take on the burden of recitation, Maisie's interjections are often rendered in and as sudden irruptions (as when, for example, "there was a burst of rippling laughter from Maisie" [35] or "Maisie's voice came from nowhere" [76]), irruptions that disrupt that performance.

Through the performance of propriety, Mrs. Rouse invokes a middle-class respectability from which she believes she has fallen (even if she has, to a certain extent, in leaving her earlier marriage, in choosing not to marry either Benoit or her middle-class suitor, already survived and refused it) in order to maintain her composure. Maisie, who has no aspirations to propriety whatsoever, dissolves that composure by her very presence. Maisie is unchecked in her carefree manner, devious behavior, and speech, enjoying the disorder that her outbursts never fail to produce, despite Mrs. Rouse's many threats to put her out. As she declares in the midst of a heated exchange with Mrs. Rouse, "'And to besides, woman,' . . . 'the days of slavery past. My tongue is my own to say what I like'" (217). This is a disorder that manifests itself both within the story and in its telling. This occurs when, for example, when Mrs. Rouse confronts the nurse:

> "I don't want any words with you, but you have been carrying on clandestine meetings with my husband, clandestine meetings——"
>
> "He is not your husband," said the nurse.
>
> From some unseen spot Maisie laughed slightly shrill but very musical, with the detached appreciation of a disinterested spectator. The nurse's lips trembled into a smile and Mrs. Rouse's temper snapped. She sprang at her enemy.
>
> "By God, woman. You think you are going to stand before me and tell me what you like, you——" The sentence ended in a stream of confused obscenity, Miss Atwell and Philomen rushing to hold back Mrs. Rouse. (56)

It is evident, again, when Mrs. Rouse explains why her newest marriage proposal does not live up to her ideals:

"Mr. Haynes," said Mrs. Rouse, "he don't want to cherish me as he put there. He have six children and i's them he want me to mind. That is what he want."

The group became aware of Maisie almost in hysterics on the little bench.

"But what's wrong with you, Maisie," asked Miss Hart.

The laughter which Maisie had been trying in vain to suppress overflowed and she wandered across the yard, her head thrown back, her hands on her hips, laughing so that she could be heard at the end of the alley.

"But what's wrong with her?" (175)

Maisie's outbursts mock the pretense of propriety, of sexual and domestic respectability, structured around the middle-class practice of marriage, the foundation of the ideals of middle-class domestic life that forms a counterpoint to the actual lives of the people who come together at No. 2. In so doing, she registers the other desires and arrangements that articulate, in antagonistic conjunction with Mrs. Rouse's aspirations, their collective life.

The forms of solidarity and mutual aid that Mrs. Rouse offers depend on collaborative work, which shows itself in the efficiency of the kitchen and the productive combination of those who work together, on their best days, to bake the cakes to sell in town. This is where something like the "spontaneous self-discipline and cohesion" that James finds in cricket seems to give form to this collective. Maisie, however, like Benoit before her, experiences this work as humiliating drudgery and refuses any form of discipline. Her interjections register an insistence, against this feeling, on pleasure. Indeed, Benoit's unapologetic abandonment of this life seems to awaken in her other desires, including sexual desires, and intensify her defiance. Although Maisie benefits from the collective that Mrs. Rouse anchors (through proceeds from the cake-baking business, Mrs. Rouse houses, feeds, and clothes her), she refuses to offer anything in return. Maisie does not want to work, at least not under the conditions in which work is available to her, for Mrs. Rouse or for anyone else, for "Why the hell should she starve and slave to get a few shillings a week from some employer in the town?" (206). She holds out, instead, for the possibility that things could be otherwise, perhaps in America, where she believes that

"you worked hard but you got good food and pay and had a fine time" (206). She openly enjoys and deploys her sexuality when and as she pleases (as she does with Haynes, whose vague and pretentious declarations of romantic love she completely dismisses) and when it is useful to her (when, for example, it will in essence pay her way for her passage to America), without shame or regret. And she will do whatever is necessary to secure her own pleasure, as the manipulation (teasing, blackmail, and so forth) through which she gets others to buy her ice cream reveals. It is such manipulation that seems, more than anything, to gall Mrs. Rouse, who often blames it for the breakdown of the collective life at No. 2. Indeed, Maisie often seems to be actively attempting to derail the relationships among members of the household, relationships on which their collective sustenance and relative independence depend. And in the end, while Mrs. Rouse rushes to the aid of her dying lover, the very lover who left, got married, and then tried to take No. 2 away from her, Maisie abandons life on Minty Alley and sails off to America on her own. This is Maisie's "grasping" for a "more complete existence," but it is no simple common cause. The novel reenacts the tension between the two ideals between which James oscillates in his theorization of cricket—the demonstrative respectability of the Shannon club players and George John's refusal to submit to such standards. John's repudiation of the management of even his facial expressions—"my face is my own"—is a visual counterpart to Maisie's unheld tongue. The aesthetic sociality of blackness is composed here across both sets of capabilities and desires.

If James, like Haynes, remains "fascinated" yet "detached," it is because he has not yet fully recognized the fundamental insurgency carried forward in the aesthetic sociality he finds in the yard. This would only become clear to him later. As he writes, later, in the drafts of the autobiography he left unfinished when he died:

> If I was detached I was also fascinated by the life of the barrack yard.
>
> I realized later why I was interested in them. They were living passionate independent lives, individual but all tangled up with one another. . . . They formed a collective grouping. They lived their life independently of the kind of pretence or desire to imitate the British style which so preoccupied the middle classes. It was the vitality and collectivity of life which fascinated me. I cannot be sure from where my

interest originated. In retrospect, however, I see that the next generation of those characters in the barrack yards was the one that made the political activity which resulted in West Indian independence.[82]

The counterclaim through which the aesthetic sociality of blackness erupts into and disrupts Oiticica's initial plans for the *Parangolé* is enacted at the first major public presentation of the *Parangolé* objects. Oiticica planned to present the capes, banners, and tents he had produced and offer a demonstration of their activation at the *Opinião 65* exhibition at Rio de Janeiro's still relatively new Museum of Modern Art. He came to the exhibition's opening wearing one of the capes he had produced and brought along with him a procession of friends, fellow *passistas* of the Mangueira samba school and residents of the Morro de Mangueira favela, who were also wearing and carrying *Parangolé* objects and beating drums, singing, and dancing.

Oiticica had invited these friends—his teacher Miro, Nildo, Jerônimo, and Mosquito, among many others—to come to the exhibition to help him demonstrate ways that these *Parangolé* objects might be engaged, which is to say, to help him initiate the experiment. Museum officials, who considered the invasion of the museum by Oiticica's collaborators to be irreverent, perhaps even dangerous, declared that they were too noisy and inadequately dressed and ejected them from the building. The police were brought in to ensure that they did not try to enter again. Surprised and appalled by the prohibition, which Oiticica condemned as racist, he left with the group. Together, Oiticica and his friends initiated an extemporaneous performance, an impromptu gathering just outside the museum, where they were joined by people who had intended to see the exhibition inside.

It is through this simple gesture and in the ways that Nildo, Miro, Jerônimo, and others took up and danced with the *Parangolé* objects outside the museum that the aesthetic sociality of blackness makes a counterclaim on Oiticica's work, in this inauguration of the *Parangolé* that enacts (and at the same time reenacts) a creative response to denigration and exclusion, an unruly, illegal occupation of space, in and as an improvised collective performance. The "experimental exercise of freedom" interjects itself into the "theoretical development" already established within Oiticica's artistic oeuvre, into Oiticica's prior attempts to take the exploration of color

beyond the flat surface of the painting and bring the spectator into the space of the work or "color-structure in space." It erupts from this work against the very idea of the work of art (even as Oiticica seeks to redefine what the work of art "may be"), against the idea of its authorship, its ownership, and its official, state-sanctioned contexts, as the black remainder of motley self-organization and activity. It is "set off" in the interplay of refusal and transformation that the inappropriate and inappropriable presence of Oiticica's black collaborators instantiates.

Oiticica recognized the insurgency of this performance and embraced it, just as he had embraced Pedrosa's notion of the experimental exercise of freedom, seeking ways to incorporate it into the theory and practice of the *Parangolé*, as he announced in another manifesto-like statement, "Position and Program." In this statement, he describes the *Parangolé* as the fullest realization of the notion of environmentation that is what the color-structure has, for him, now become. He highlights the ethical and political implications that he now associates with that practice or "position" and that he has begun to explore more fully by incorporating language into the *Parangolé*:

> An ethical necessity of another kind comes into being here, which I would also include in the environmental. . . . This is the social manifestation, incorporating an ethical (as well as political position which come together as manifestation of individual behavior). I should make it a bit clearer, first of all, that such a position can only be a totally anarchic position; such is the degree of liberty implicit in it. It is against everything that is oppressive, socially and individually—all the fixed and decadent forms of government, or reigning social structures. The "socio-environmental" position is the starting point for all social and political changes, or the fermenting of them at least. . . . For me, the most complete expression of this entire concept of "environmentation" was the formulation of what I called Parangolé.[83]

Here he reconceives the role of the artist as an "instigator of creation—creation as such," a process that "completes itself through the dynamic participation of the 'spectator,' now described as a 'participator,'" who finds "something he may want to realize" (or not). Assuming the posture of participator himself, Oiticica understands his own "finding" as precisely this kind of participation, one in which "things are found which one never

thought to look for." Such participation (which he refers to in this statement as antiart) constitutes "the true link between creativity and the collectivity," in that "there is complete accessibility for whoever arrives" and "no one is constrained by being in the presence of 'art.'"[84]

Through the *Parangolé*, through the "movement and, ultimately, dance" that it "calls for," the "corporal-expressive transmutation of oneself,"[85] Oiticica now also hoped to provoke and open "the individual revolt against every social conditioning,"[86] including middle-class notions of "well-being" rooted in a normative, heteropatriarchal "family life." He explicitly links this revolt to the rebellious, criminal behavior he encountered among some of the favela residents he befriended. Cara de Cavalo, the infamous armed bandit who was later murdered by the dictatorship's unofficial death squad, is emblematic for Oiticica of this "dangerous but necessary" behavior. Oiticica insists that the *Parangolé* means "to lend a strong hand" to such forms of revolt, which aspire to different kinds of social arrangements rooted in very different notions of "well-being" or "happiness":

> In a way, it justifies all individual revolt against established values and patterns (revolutions, for ex.), including the most visceral and personal (that of the outlaw—one who exists on the margins of society—which is what we call those who rebel, kill, or steal). Because they expect no gratification but utopian happiness (even if it leads to self-destruction), such manifestations are important. How true the image of the outlaw who dreams of making money from a particular robbery in order to give his mother a home or build his own small farm in the countryside (a way of returning to anonymity) in order to be "happy"! Crime is actually a desperate search for true happiness in contrast to false, established, stagnant social values which preach "well-being" and "family life" but only work for a small minority. All great human aspiration to a "happy life" can only come to pass through great revolt and destruction: sociologists, intelligent politicians, and theoreticians all say so! The *Parangolé* program means to lend a strong hand to such manifestations. I know this is a dangerous double-edged statement, but it is worthwhile. Only a villain would stand against an Antônio Conselheiro, a Lampião, or a Cara de Cavalo in favor of those who destroyed them.[87]

The criminality of Cara de Cavalo is linked here to a history of radical refusal and rebellion, represented in this passage by the efforts of two other notorious outlaws, Antônio Conselheiro and Lampião. Antônio Conselheiro established, with a motley cohort of former slaves, uprooted indigenous peoples, impoverished *mestizos*, and other insurgents, apart from and against the newly founded republic, the alternative millenarian community of Bello Monte. Virgulino Ferreira da Silva, or Lampião, was a famous *cangaço*, an outlaw or "social bandit," one of a number of poor peasants who refused the rule of the landowners and set up rebel encampments in the backlands or Sertão of northeast Brazil in the early twentieth century. If the moral freedom or "antimorality" that Oiticica hoped the *Parangolé* would help instigate is to be rooted in "individual experience" and is identified here, through the figure of the outlaw or antiartist, with the individuation of a communal criminality, it is also linked to an understanding of happiness as a "returning to anonymity," resonant with Oiticica's earlier valorization of anonymity in samba; but Oiticica mentions that only in passing, and the idea remains, here, still undeveloped.

It is the inaugural event outside the Museum of Modern Art that imbued the *Parangolé* with the insurgent energy that Oiticica came to valorize and that he attempted to reproduce and grow in and as other stagings of the *Parangolé*. In these stagings, samba and the *sambistas* he invited to participate continued to exemplify and even expand Oiticica's sense of what the *Parangolé*, as intercorporal space and experience, could open. And it was to these *sambistas* that he turned when beginning the larger, Collective *Parangolé* he envisioned "growing" from them. As Oiticica states,

> These manifestations of the Parangolé (or rehearsals for the Collective *Parangolé*) will have to grow, not like a sophisticated "happening" (still something for an elite, or "against" this elite), but like a succession of behaviors that are confirmed at each proposition: "wear this" "enter there" "step through here" etc. are propositions that are born within the course of the manifestation, from improvisation, concerning the individual behavior of each; the problem, then, of addressing a determinate group, or elite, or intellectuality, is here abolished. This is an experience to be made in collective contexts each time larger, *without previous preparation* for producing or obtaining a certain result.[88]

This Collective *Parangolé* is set off by the small gesture of inviting a group of young women from the samba school—Rosemary and Roseleny Souza Mattos, Helena and Lucía Cardoso—to produce *Parangolé* objects themselves. Oiticica proposed that these objects be brought to other participants, in order to initiate a new experience of wearing and watching. Those who participated in that experience would, in turn, be asked to create new objects for the manifestation that would follow. What Oiticica desired now was "the beginning of a collective expression," which would occur when he "turned the *Parangolé* over to the anonymous collective genius from which it emerged."[89] Eventually Oiticica came to realize that this "genius" had already taken it, without his authorization, and given it to him in a way that disrupts the act of appropriation that is fundamental to any possible understanding of the relation between the artist and "his work," just as James later came to acknowledge the autonomous force of collective self-organization shaped through a spontaneous self-discipline and cohesion that he had sought to represent and had at times sought to organize rather than to join.

James and Oiticica never fully abandoned their pursuit of a national—Trinidadian or West Indian and Brazilian or "Tropical"—aesthetic, realized through the figure of the artist and his work. James ultimately published *Minty Alley* in 1936. As one of the first West Indian novels published in England, it represented for him an instance of the West Indies "speaking for itself to the modern world"[90] (despite or perhaps because of the complex layering of its narrative voice), asserting its independence. And while Oiticica is perhaps most recognized for his 1967 installation *Tropicália*, which offered a complex image of Brazil to the international art world, he also declared that he had found, in the open form of the *Parangolé* (most fully captured in a photograph of a friend from the favela, Jerônimo, wearing one of the capes in the park), an image or expression of Brazilian culture suggesting the "open potential of a *culture in formation*."[91] But neither ever disavowed or distanced himself from the aesthetic sociality of blackness and the disruptive claims it makes on the artist and his work through forms of improvisational and collective creative activity that enact the principle of incompleteness. And it is through the dispersal and unraveling of James's and Oiticica's identities as artists and the diffusion of their works and the grand narratives and ideals that those works were supposed

to embody that James and Oiticica become black intellectuals. In so doing, they also become problems that cannot be accommodated within the polities of Trinidad and Brazil (which offered, at any rate, in the context of colonial authority under which Trinidadians had no say in the governance of the island and a dictatorship that had just enacted, in its fifth "institutional act," AI-5, a suspension of the constitution and its guarantees, only the pretense of inclusion). James's other piece of barrack-yard fiction, the short story "Triumph," which had been his contribution to the inaugural edition of *Trinidad*, the literary journal he helped establish, had already been viciously attacked through angry letters and reviews in other journals. As Kenneth Ramchand notes, it particularly offended those who were invested in the notion of middle-class respectability and its simultaneously staid and fantastic Afro-Saxon performances as the precondition for self-government.

> In the "Editorial Notes" to the second issue of *Trinidad*, Mendes quotes *The Trinidad Guardian* of December 22, 1929 on the impact of the Xmas 1929 number: "Letters protesting against the obscenities of the Magazine have been pouring into the guardian office during the past week. One is from a Boy Scout who says: 'Its disagreeable implications cast unwarrantable aspersions on the fair name of our beautiful Island.' Another letter describes the volume as 'nasty.' The writer fears that other young writers will think it smart to be the same."[92]

Oiticica's demonstration of solidarity with the marginalized outlaw in a banner he displayed in 1968 at a club where friends, the musicians Gilberto Gil and Caetano Veloso, were playing precipitated the shutdown of the concert and the arrests of Gil and Veloso. The bright-red banner, which reproduced a newspaper photograph of the dead body of one of those outlaws, Alcir Figueira da Silva, who had committed suicide to avoid being arrested by the police, along with the phrase "seja marginal, seja herói" (be an outlaw, be a hero), openly antagonized the dictatorship and the dictatorship's declaration, transmitted through the educational materials it circulated in secondary schools and through the press at that time, that in contrast to the idea of the experimental exercise of freedom that Oiticica embraced, "to subordinate our own freedoms to the common good is the maximum norm of the exercise of liberty in the social order."[93]

Both James and Oiticica took flight in search of a more welcoming context for their work and, perhaps more importantly, the critical disruptions of the very idea of aesthetic work and the work that had radicalized it. For if James's and Oiticica's studies of and within the aesthetic sociality of blackness attend to that formation's contribution to the theory and practice of reinventing social life, it also awakened them to the fact that such reinvention disrupts notions of individual authorship or leadership and closed social and aesthetic forms. James and Oiticica were ambivalent about their own roles as authors, repeatedly seeking over the course of their careers the polite society of the literary publication or the art exhibition, even as those spaces so often proved inhospitable to their experiments, and aspiring to the recognition that is granted to closed forms, even as their works became less and less recognizable as such. At the same time, however, both remained committed to maintaining contact with the motley aesthetic sociality of blackness, in all its disruptive dissidence. In entering into that sociality and in extending its means of insurgent expression through new aesthetic practices that are also social practices, James and Oiticica recalled—and anticipated—the motley crew that Linebaugh and Rediker mourn. But they had to continue these experiments elsewhere, in exile.

2

DIALECTIC OF CONTACT

The Organ/ization and the Nests

As James and Oiticica became attuned to the aesthetic sociality of blackness, the barrack yards and the favelas were where they went to study it and claim it. But James and Oiticica were not initially of these spaces. The relative privilege that shaped their lives was structured by their detachment from the sociality that was contained—brutally, if never fully—within them. James's and Oiticica's contact with the aesthetic sociality of blackness, however, destabilized their social identities. It opened James's black lower-middle-class status, secured by its respectability, to precisely those dangers of "engulfment" that his family had struggled to guard itself against, precipitating his interest and involvement in the political representation of the "barefoot man" in Trinidad, Pan-African and anticolonial movements, revolutionary Marxism, and autonomous radicalism. It "undid" what Oiticica referred to as the "bourgeois conditioning" to which he had been "submitted" since birth, enabling his identification and association with the marginalized and criminalized and prompting him to question existing social divisions and to begin to imagine their undoing. This contact also challenged their identities as artists. While James and Oiticica attempted to appropriate and deploy the aesthetic sociality of blackness within the Eurocentric national projects they had been pursuing in ways that would seem to replicate the exploitation that fuels such Eurocentric projects, James's and Oiticica's contact with the aesthetic sociality of blackness disrupted and rerouted those projects, as well as their understandings of their own authorship and ownership of them, moving them both toward a reconstruction of the Eurocentric theoretical premises on which they had

previously proceeded as it clarified and radicalized their desires. What they found was not the raw material for their own aesthetic and social theories but sophisticated theoretical principles in formation—"some kind of philosophy,"[1] as James later described it, a set of "constructive principles,"[2] to use Oiticica's phrase—produced and elaborated in and through experimental practice. Such principles proved to be dangerous supplements to the European aesthetic and social theories they had previously studied and imbibed through their middle-class or bourgeois upbringing.

Through their contact with the aesthetic sociality of blackness, then, James and Oiticica arrived at expanded understandings of the possibilities for aesthetic practice and for alternative insurgent social organization. And they began to recognize the importance of contact, not just for their own projects but for the aesthetic sociality of blackness itself insofar as the aesthetic sociality of blackness extends the experimental reconfiguration of contact—contact under the lash—that Linebaugh and Rediker identify with the insurgent activity of the motley crew.

In exile, James and Oiticica were detached from those radical experiments in contact. Situated initially within the scenes of the political and cultural vanguard, those tied to the revolutionary political parties of the 1940s or the commercialized art world of the 1970s, they were disappointed by the ways in which these vanguards absorbed and defused dissident social activity, subordinating autonomous liberation struggles to the "universal struggle" that was the party line or transforming the creative practices of the underground into bourgeois fads. Their disappointment moved them to seek out other kinds of contact that would not be so contained. But how could they, as intellectuals from elsewhere, whose situations were increasingly precarious after their visas expired, make contact beyond the confines of the narrow networks into which they had been officially invited?

Both men sought out contact first with a more general public by participating in what they perceived to be the creative reception of a mass culture. Both also made contact with marginalized social formations—dissident sharecroppers and disobedient rank-and-file industrial plant workers, members of criminalized street gangs in the South Bronx and performers and participants in the queer sexual underground. The more regular and sustained contact they entered into, however, was with those who, like James and Oiticica, met and operated in the interstices and fringes of revolutionary or avant-garde art movements. Working with many of the people

they met there, James and Oiticica initiated some experiments of their own, constructing (and regularly reconstructing) new apparatuses for inviting and provisionally structuring contact, with the hopes that amid the tensions and difficulties but also the pleasures of that contact, they might be able to continue the kinds of experiments in aesthetic and social composition, arrangement, and organization that had been so transformative for them. James pursued this through a radical political organization and organ called *Correspondence*. Oiticica explored it in the architectural installations he called *Babylônests* and *Hendrixsts*. In these strange, mobile apparatuses—private domiciles, gathering spaces, workspaces, receivers, transmitters, and beacons all at once—intimacy and public communication were collapsed and remade. The experiments undertaken there rearranged radical intellectual work, particularly writing, and unraveled heteronormative domesticity. In the context of these experiments in contact, queerness in its most expansive sense becomes apparent as a crucial counterpart to blackness in its most expansive sense, both irreducible to the forms of individuation and social relations that the state requires. And it is not just James's and Oiticica's personal identities that were challenged, not just their ideals and aspirations as individual authors, but the very idea of individuation itself as the telos, as well as the catalyst, of a movement toward freedom. For James, this entailed a necessary but uncomfortable critique and practical displacement of the anticolonial and revolutionary intellectual and his work; for Oiticica, it resulted in an inexorable, even at times ambivalent, displacement of the avant-garde artist and his work.

But if contact was the condition of possibility and the focus for the projects that James and Oiticica undertook in exile, particularly in New York, how can we theorize contact, particularly given the brutal terms under which contact in the Americas has been historically imposed, structured, and regulated? Who enters into it, and under what terms? What is the value of that contact, and for whom? In Linebaugh and Rediker's recounting, eighteenth-century New York was a key point of intersection for those who made up the Atlantic proletariat, its public spaces offering opportunities for precisely the kinds of contact among the displaced and dispossessed that fostered the motley crew's initial expansion and reconfiguration into an insurgent force. Samuel R. Delany argues that the contact that New York's late twentieth-century public spaces accommodated was also vital

for establishing the conditions for new, more pleasurable forms of social life. The exemplary instances, for Delany, of such contact are the casual erotic encounters among men, including Delany himself, who frequented the pornographic theaters in Times Square prior to its sanitization and reconstruction in the mid-1990s. In exploring, from the perspective of what Mary Louise Pratt would call an "autoethnographic"[3] observer, the difficult, conflictual pleasures of these encounters and its various other "payoffs," Delany offers a theory of contact and its potential value.

Delany is interested in the sensual and social experience of contact as a kind of centrifugal force that throws individuals beyond the limits of their given social fields. He is particularly interested in contact across class boundaries, as it occurs in the context of class conflict between what has become of the Atlantic proletariat and the Atlantic bourgeoisie. Such contact, Delany insists, can assume any number of forms of "intercourse." Aligning the most seemingly mundane interactions with casual sex, he highlights the erotic underpinning to all forms of contact:

> Contact is the conversation that starts in the line at the grocery counter with the person behind you while the clerk is changing the paper roll in the cash register. It is the pleasantries exchanged with a neighbor who has brought her chair out to take some air on the stoop. It is the discussion that begins with the person next to you at a bar. It can be the conversation that starts with any number of semiofficials or service persons—mailman, policeman, librarian, store clerk or counterperson. As well it can be two men watching each other masturbating together in adjacent urinals of a public john—an encounter that, later, may or may not become a conversation. Very importantly contact is also intercourse—physical or conversational—that blooms in and as "casual sex" in public rest rooms, sex movies, public parks, singles bars, and sex clubs, on street corners.[4]

Delany distinguishes "contact" from another social-net practice that he calls "networking." While the benefits of networking, he insists, are real, he describes it as a less satisfactory, default form of connection; it is "what people do when those with like interests live too far apart to be thrown together in public spaces through chance and propinquity" (128). Crossing class lines "only in the most vigilant manner," it "tends to be professional and motive-driven" and is often structured by competition (129). As he

says at one point, "it *is* the class war" (139) understood as an exclusionary, sometimes virtual, often conflictual, congregation and collaboration organized around the identification with and furthering of a set of class interests. In this regard, networking could be understood as the intraclass contact that defines the Atlantic bourgeoisie.

Contact, however, according to Delany, can destabilize the established networks that anchor and consolidate the social classes at war: "Two orders of social force are always at work. One set [networking] is centripetal and works to hold a given class stable. Another set [contact] is centrifugal and works to break a given class apart . . . sending individuals off into other class arenas" (140). If Delany is interested in the possibility of mobility, he is also interested in the way it enables forms of association and pleasure that are otherwise foreclosed in the competitive context of networking-as-class-warfare. It forges ties between people who would otherwise seem to have nothing in common through new (if often short-lived and situational) collectivities, traversing and opening, at least for a while, the intraclass connections through which the social order constituted by the social classes and the divisions between them is otherwise maintained. Attempts to eradicate contact are based, however, on mistaken assumptions regarding its unambiguous dangers. Decrying campaigns to "clean up" Times Square as rooted in such mistaken assumptions, Delany envisions the production, even state administration, of new contact zones modeled on the very porn theaters that are the target of such campaigns: "I propose that in a democratic city it is imperative that we speak to strangers, live next to them, and learn how to relate to them on many levels, including the sexual. City venues must be designed to allow these multiple interactions to occur easily, with a minimum of danger, comfortably, and conveniently. That is what politics—the way of living in the polis, in the city—is about" (193).

Delany's "democratic city" would be a contact zone whose social energy is held within a delicate balance of disturbance and conservation. There, the erotic pleasures of contact with strangers would stabilize the class conflicts that they temporarily suspend. The "payoffs" of contact remain open in and to the very social order that seeks to regulate that contact, as it deploys and exploits its generative pleasures. But if contact is integral rather than antithetical to regulation in this vision, it is so precisely in its ongoing endangerment, which Delany illuminates, of the already existing social order. The formally democratic city whose future Delany envisions

is already present in the informally democratic city he inhabits; the former is made imaginable and possible by the kind of contact Delany performs and describes, even as its transformative capacities are strictly regulated and ultimately liquidated in and by the former. Delany's theory reveals an equilibrium that must be disturbed, even though its most essential features require conservation. When contact is shown to be compatible with networking, when its enactment is not only exploited and accumulated but also deployed in the networked strategies of bourgeois class warfare, further theoretical intervention is required. What if Delany's emphatic desire for the destabilization of exclusionary class formations were inflected by a sense of the possibilities that emerge from the intraclass sociality of the excluded, whose resistance to that exclusion constitutes its own prosecution of class warfare?

Mary Louise Pratt widens the scope of these questions by investigating the forms of contact that developed and continue to develop in the broader context of the imperial settlement of the New World, where the class warfare cannot be separated from its basis and extension in "colonialism and slavery, or their aftermaths as they are lived out across the globe today," where "peoples geographically and historically separated come into contact with each other and establish ongoing relations, usually involving conditions of coercion, radical inequality, and intractable conflict."[5]

Pratt's focus on the "arts of the contact zone," which cannot be contained by any unified national language, expressive practice, or singular aesthetic, emphasizes "how subjects get constituted in and by their relations to each other," highlighting "co-presence, interaction, interlocking understandings and practices" and the improvisational dimensions of such practices under the duress of assumed and enforced inequality.[6] She is interested, in particular, in contact's expression in a specific kind of authorial possibility—autoethnography—that emerges against the backdrop of a conflict in which the objects of European ethnography "construct [texts] *in response to* or in dialogue with" the texts of European ethnography.[7]

Autoethnographic texts that emerge from the contact zones are, Pratt insists, not "autochthonous forms of representation or self-representation";[8] they are counterdiscursive. They "involve a selective collaboration with and appropriation of idioms of the metropolis or the conqueror" (much as Delany's work appropriates the language of an urban sociology whose norms he seeks aggressively to disrupt) and often parodic, oppositional representations of the conquerors' own modes of expression, attempts "to intervene in

metropolitan modes of understanding."[9] Indeed, the model Pratt proposes for this practice comes from what linguists call "contact languages," such as pidgin, which Linebaugh and Rediker single out as the exemplary expressive form of the Atlantic proletariat within which the motley crew takes shape. The exemplary text, for Pratt, is *The First New Chronicle of Good Government*, a twelve-hundred-page letter written in the style of the "chronicles" of Spanish conquistadors, in a mixture of Quechua (which was not based in any graphic system of writing) and "ungrammatical, expressive Spanish," by the indigenous Andean author Felipe Guaman Poma de Ayala to King Phillip III of Spain, in which the author offers a critical rewriting of Incan history and Spanish conquest and constructs an imaginary question-and-answer session in which he responds to the king's queries by making recommendations for reforming the empire.

Insofar as these kinds of authorial practices operate, as Pratt suggests, as a means by which subjects, even anti-imperial subjects, "get constituted in and by their relations to each other," the negotiation and reconfiguration of the terms of contact that such texts perform would seem to be limited (particularly when such subjects are constituted when addressing themselves to and seeking recognition from their imperial sovereigns), the contact zone operating as what Saidiya V. Hartman theorizes as a "scene of subjection." But, Pratt notes, while Guaman Poma's letter is technically addressed to the king (who never read it), its code crossing speaks to multiple audiences, bringing together readers (to whom the text "means differently") in other kinds of scenes that enact further reconfigurations of contact that are extended in Pratt's own text. What if Pratt brought some of those other scenes more fully into view?

If Delany's and Pratt's theoretical reflections on contact, brought into contact here, focus on the various modes of antagonistic cooperation that occur *across* social divisions in the context of the often violent conflicts as well as unexpected "intimacies"[10] that mark the contact zones of the New World, Linebaugh and Rediker recall our attention to the structures of agonistic collaboration that occur *within* a given class formation whose internal racial differences could be characterized as the strong force of differentiation that binds that formation together. What Linebaugh and Rediker identify is, in the modified forms that take shape when the motley fades to black, what I have argued James and Oiticica studied and entered into, claiming the disruptive claim that the aesthetic sociality of blackness makes on them in

texts that perform autoethnography's already-mirrored mirror image. They did so, or attempted to do so, even as they enacted the kind of contact that Delany and Pratt identify and describe, so that interclass contact with intraclass solidarity might merge with and enhance an interclass conflict activated from below. The insurgent forces that Linebaugh and Rediker recover and that James and Oiticica claimed, are only given in and as intramural differences. The extramural relations in which James and Oiticica engaged opened them to a new set of theoretical possibilities for radical aesthetic sociality that emerged by way of internal difference and intramural contact within communities or polities that are something other and more than either of these terms, which are in any case denied to them.

Ultimately, James and Oiticica aspired to something akin to but distinct from the contact that emerges in the zones that Pratt describes and that Delany proposes. But the recognition of this distinction that they are after is made possible by way of the accounts Pratt and Delany offer, both of which are attuned to the ameliorative or conservative effects that contact might produce and that radical transformation requires. Pratt is aware of and calls our attention to the ways that autoethnographic texts can model, in their very critiques of colonization, a range of collaborative arrangements between the conquered and their conquerors. Delany must valorize contact's ability to supplement existing social relations and stabilize them by making them a little more "pleasant," suggesting that contact can help to preserve the already-given structure of class bonds and class division.[11] James and Oiticica wanted to find out *what else* contact might make possible. The contact and the experimental methods by which it was enacted and given aesthetic form in Correspondence/*Correspondence*, James's revolutionary organization and organ, and *Babylônests* and *Hendrixsts*, Oiticica's elaborate, installation-like Nests, would be the condition of possibility for new forms of common life. The exploration of these new forms of contact, which entailed both the creative improvisation across idioms that Pratt highlights and the erotic interaction that Delany emphasizes, required both of them to gravitate toward old forms of contact, "the new basis for common life," that are often overlooked.

New York City was where James and Oiticica each spent a significant portion of their exiles. There James and Oiticica initially found themselves circulating within what turned out to be, despite all claims to the contrary,

the restricted professional networks of the vanguard. They arrived in New York, by way of England, to help conduct the unofficial and informal social and cultural business of the city. James was invited to offer his insights and advice to the Trotskyite Workers Party, and Oiticica was awarded a Guggenheim grant to pursue his artwork. Planning to stay only temporarily (James during the months between cricket seasons and Oiticica for the time period specified by the grant), they both applied for and received legal visas. They both stayed on, however, long after their visas expired, as undocumented interlopers, semifugitives, living and working more or less underground. James announced his "retirement." Writing henceforth only under pseudonyms, he abandoned whatever hopes for literary prominence he may have had, along with any hopes for financial stability and independence. Oiticica more or less stopped exhibiting in the United States, refusing invitations even from the prestigious Museum of Modern Art that had brought him to the United States on an earlier visit, working instead at night between languages as a proofreader for a translation company and in other unofficial capacities. Both attempted to obtain permission for legal residency, but each was deemed ineligible for it, in part because of the kinds of contact they were involved in while in the United States. James's status as a family man, established by legally marrying a U.S. citizen and fathering a U.S.-born child, could not override the inadmissibility of his involvement with the radical and illegal organizing efforts of rank-and-file workers; and Oiticica's status as a waged worker could not override the inadmissibility of his queer sexuality. Their statelessness, which had in a sense already been a given under the crown colony in Trinidad and the military dictatorship in Brazil (both allied with and aided by U.S. military forces), was now redoubled. Cut off from the possibility of legitimate citizenship and from contact with the kind of alternative formations with which they had associated and become associated in Trinidad and Brazil, they sought out, in the vast and dispersed context of the United States, new associations and new modes of association or contact.

While they looked for fellowship within their vanguard milieus, revolutionary politics, in James's case, and the art world, in Oiticica's case, they also sought out a wider range of association. Their searches would lead them first to a more general public with whom they sought to commune by way of a productive reception or reception-in-common of the popular art forms they encountered in the United States. Such a reception would be, they imagined, a form of collective participation suggesting the possibility of an

expanded, more inclusive form of citizenship. At the same time, however, James and Oiticica sought out contact, on the outskirts of citizenship, with what remained unencompassed and unsubsumed not only by vanguardist formations and the state itself but also by the forms of reception-in-common they were trying to imagine and establish.

James's and Oiticica's immersions in popular art forms in the United States began almost immediately. In what they experienced as the vast and scattered social space of the United States, popular art offered them their first mooring. As James later recalled, in the midst of his eventual detention as an undocumented alien, comic strips and B movies were his initial points of entry into the United States, they were the means through which he tried to become "part of the American people" (who are themselves "consumed" by the need for "intimate communion" with their fellows):

> I landed in the United States in October, 1938. I remember my first journey from Chicago to Los Angeles, by train—the apparently endless miles, hour after hour, all day and all night and the next morning the same again, until the evening. I experienced a sense of expansion which has permanently altered my attitude toward the world.
>
> From that beginning, stage by stage, I have spared no pains to understand the United States and become a part of the American people. I remember that for years I pertinaciously read comic strips, unable to see what Americans saw in them. I persisted until at last today I will walk blocks to get my comics. In Europe and when I first came here I went to see movies of international reputation. Now I am a neighborhood man, and I prefer to see B gangster pictures than the best examples of cinema art. I know the tension of American life and the underlying tension which give American movies, however superficial, the permanent attraction they have.[12]

Oiticica, overwhelmed by the isolation he experienced while attempting to establish himself in New York (in contrast with the lively social scenes of Rio), also turned to popular art as a kind of compensation. Seeing films and attending rock concerts and festivals forced Oiticica to experience the collective atomization that is the effect of the popular public sphere. He was both horrified and relieved by this isolation-in-common, or "super-accompanied solitude." As he explains in a letter to his fellow artist and friend Lygia Clark:

> In Rio, with all the tragic problems there are there . . . my house was always full, and I can say that I had many people (almost too many) around; so this adaptation and readaptation, etc., is terrible, and even more in the cruel winter everything else; but the hunger for seeing films and things was so great, when I arrived, that I believe it was offset; I reached a point of thinking that all the things that happen here just serve to disperse, so it is necessary to know how to balance everything.[13]

At the most basic level, these popular art forms offer an opportunity to commune with others and participate in a collective aesthetic experience. But these were not collective productions; they were mass-produced, mass-distributed commodities available for general consumption, not at all popular in the way that cricket and samba had been. The "popularity" of these commodities was the shadow of their widespread and corporate-driven circulation. Both James and Oiticica tried to reimagine mass art forms, however, as genuinely popular art forms, genuinely collective expressive practices made so in and by their reception. They theorized reception as an active experience, not one in which the audience must simply assimilate an already finished product but something more dialectical and simultaneous. Borrowing Pratt's terms, we might say that reception in this sense would constitute a kind of general autoethnography. But James and Oiticica also hoped that such reception could also constitute a mode of creative participation and belonging that would be something like citizenship or, rather, what citizenship promises but fails to be: involvement in what James described as the collective project of creating new social arrangements or in what Oiticica referred to as the invention of a new world. But James and Oiticica found instances of this only in glimmers. James discerned it in popular art before the Depression. Oiticica sensed it most fully in the near past of the "Woodstockian" era. Reception, then, in the alternative sense that James and Oiticica imagined it, seems to have been relegated, on the one hand, to the past and deferred and, on the other hand, to an unspecified future.

James attempted to outline his views in the context of the notes he composed in the United States, the loosely and provisionally formed manuscript that was posthumously edited and published as *American Civilization*. Noting that the masses were denied self-expression and free association at work, he attempted to find a basis for such expression and association by way of mass art reconceived as popular art. Focusing on

film, music, and comics, James argues against prevailing critiques of their passive reception by the masses, insisting that "to believe that the great masses of the people are merely passive recipients of what the purveyors of popular art give to them is in reality to see people as dumb slaves. It is a conception totally unhistorical."[14] Instead, James argues that the producers of popular art sense and respond to the mood of the mass, which in turn validates that capacity to sense and respond and further expresses its demands through its purchasing power. Reception, at its most radical, works its way, dialectically, into the production process itself. James offers the example of early, pre-Depression-era jazz, which was "essentially music for the *new dancing*": "One of the old band leaders speaking recently compares the modern bands and listeners to the old. 'We,' he said, 'played for folks to dance to. And how they danced in the old days.' . . . In a big hall, he said, a sensitive leader *caught the rhythm for the evening from the dancers*. And when he had caught it, he told his band to hold it. The crowd of dancers therefore expressed their particular feeling for that evening and it was transferred to the musicians" (137). Early jazz, James argues, reflects a general condition in which reception "is the fundamental determinant of the artistic content and form of these productions. The mass is not merely passive. It decides what it will see. It will pay to see that. The makers of movies, the publishers of comic strips are in violent competition with each other for the mass to approve what they produce. Any success tends to be repeated and squeezed dry, for these people are engaged primarily in making money. *Huge and consistent successes are an indication of mass demand*" (123).

In this way, the mass, effectively shapes the direction of future production. This interplay between "sensing" and "demanding" constitutes, for James, a kind of coauthorship. Its most profound product emerged before the Great Depression: the figure of the tramp that appeared in the films of Charlie Chaplin. In this figure, "Chaplin represented the ideals of the society in their constant conflict with reality" insofar as the tramp, as individual, "defied the growing mechanization and socialization of life." As James notes, "He was an individual to the point of extreme idiosyncrasy. With his flopping shoes, baggy pants and derby he invaded every scene and sought to make himself at home" (133). Chaplin himself, as an individual artist, is a product of the mass that emerges within the context of that mechanization and socialization:

> The early producers, actors, directors, etc. worked on their own for the simple public, despised by intellectuals, critics, and all the educated members of society. Yet by themselves, pioneers and common place public between them, they produced the greatest artist of modern times, Charles Chaplin, and in him they produced something that was *new* and contains in it the elements of the future. . . . Chaplin goes very deep into the social needs of today and tomorrow. (132)

It is not simply that the figure of the tramp reflects, and even anticipates, the conditions of the masses; it is that the artist who conceives that figure is, himself, a product of the masses. This complex dialectic of individuation, in which the mass is symbolized by a lone figure that has, itself, been conceived by the lone figure of the artist whom the mass, itself, produces, proves fragile. After the Great Depression, "the modern world was too harsh for the traditional tramp. This harshness . . . killed him" (132). It would no longer be possible to critique or defy reality even in the playful ways Chaplin had done, having been sent by the masses into a world in which free individuality, in the case of both the individual artist and his individual avatar, are no longer viable. The possibilities of individual freedom persist only in perverse forms in the violent, sadistic characters of gangster and detective stories and in the glamorized star. The modern mass, "deprived of any serious treatment of the problems which overwhelm it since 1929" (146), has identified with these characters as "negative" expressions of its desires: "To what extent are the violent, murderous rejection and the adoration of individuals characteristic of the mass in general? They are inherent in society but only in a society in which the actual deepest desires of the mass cannot find expression. They are essentially a perversion" (148). Individuation, the metaphysical assumption on which alienation is based, is seen as that which would remedy the alienation that it founds. This is a crisis. The needs and desires of the mass must find some form of expression. While popular art still represents "some of the deepest feelings of the masses," it does so only negatively and "within the common agreement—no serious political or social questions which would cause explosions" (123). What is coming, what "must come" now (to counter totalitarian efforts to impose these needs and desires), is, according to James, a new art that is "for the mass openly and directly" (155). But the model that James offers for this new art is an even older one, that of ancient Greek drama, in which newly formed democracy was emblematized by, and could

even be seen as modeled on, the organized festivals in which the citizenry gathered to listen to the dramas together: The "drama was written for the mass, for the *whole population* (except the slaves) and the national question was such that the basic problems could be tackled" (123).

If James's vision for an art form that would go back to the future maintains an allegiance to a structure and an ethics of reception that tends to elide whatever difference he hopes to establish between the passive and the active, perhaps it is because, ironically, he cannot quite recognize what surely the masses must—that the free individuality and imposed eccentricity of the tramp is a form of burdened exile that corresponds to the figure of the artist. Is witnessing a form of participation? Can identification turn into aspiration? The answer, for James, may be affirmative, but authorship, or auteurship, is required. Modern popular art will be free, James suggests at one point, "in the consciousness of the artist that a vast public is ready to assemble together to listen to him" (158). Such listening, for James, would be an integral, productive aspect of this art: "What I am trying to say about modern popular art is that, in the modern world, we have in our hands, the means, and a social situation in which once more, in an infinitely more complicated manner, great drama will be written, about the great problems which confront men today, by men conscious of the mass audience, as Aeschylus was conscious, with an audience ready to participate to the full, its participation an integral part in the drama" (155). Such collective participation, which would entail a coming together to confront and solve the great problems of the day, would be both aesthetic and political in the most expansive possible sense of each term. It is, James announces, quoting Werner Jaeger, "a sharing in the terrors of human destiny" (155). James finds a fuller figure for this in an assembly of newly freed slaves:

> To get the idea of participation, we must go . . . to Auden's image of the ball game but even that is not enough. Perhaps a mass-revival meeting of Negroes just relieved from slavery would give another avenue to understanding. A realistic sermon on the sufferings of Christ or the saints would elicit from the audience a tremendous response for they too had suffered and were suffering; but at least they were now free, and the bitterness of the exposition could serve only to call forth and strengthen their fundamental faith. (156).

This, for James, would be citizenship in the fullest possible sense, the inclusion of aspects of life that had been excluded and of the very people previously excluded—work and workers. This would be a citizenship inspired by that of ancient Greece but grounded, now, on the one thing it refused to contend with: work and the slaves who performed it. "The Greeks of the fifth century aimed at universality. They accomplished the miracles that they did but they failed because they did not, they could not, take into account one particular aspect of universality—how a man labored. The slave did the hard work. Labor as such became degraded. . . . It was slavery which killed the democracy. Today we are once more at an age when universality is on the order of the day. But today universality begins with man in the labor process" (158).

Ultimately, James's concern with "man in the labor process"—with the actuality of the person working and the working class—was manifested in a new formation of the artistic/theoretical work, in which the distinction between reception and authorship was placed under even greater pressure. But this only returns us to the question concerning the subjection of the newly freed, the ones who are, in the end, bound to listen. Ultimately, the difference between the passive and the active reception of the image of the representative individual is displaced by the difference between reception and participation. The story of that displacement is the story of James's sojourn in the United States.

In Oiticica's search for the otherwise obscure interplay of reception and participation, he found an ideal in rock music. As he explained in a letter to his friend and colleague the Brazilian artist Carlos Vergara, what is great about Jimi Hendrix, and about Alice Cooper, and the Rolling Stones, among others, is that they offer their audiences the opportunity for a different kind of collective experience: the "direct experience of the body as antiritual antienvironmental environment . . . establishes a level of collective participatory (not just theatricalized) experience that is new."[15]

Oiticica gives a more elaborate—though also scattered and fragmentary—account of this kind of experience in the loosely formed preamble to an audiotape he made for his friend the Brazilian concrete poet Augusto de Campos of what he describes as the non- or beyond-national recorded music of Hendrix. Here he suggests that rock produces "a manifestation, a manifestation that is . . . collective on a grand scale,"[16] differently than the manifestations of experimental vanguard groups. Describing his experience at a Marvishnu

concert in Central Park, Oiticica explains that such manifestations give rise to a "a kind of delirium . . . something that raced, almost, through the collectivity and Jimi Hendrix."[17] Though Oiticica too sought models for this kind of experience in ancient Greece (in Nietzsche's ideas about "Dionysian excitation," which Oiticica counterposed to Hegel's account of the delight in spectacle that fueled the brutality of ancient Rome, or "Babylon"), the delirium Oiticica describes in this scene is linked to Hendrix because it was, Oiticica suggests, incited most profoundly by Hendrix's "music-word-dancebody" performances, which reach a kind of peak, for Oiticica, in Hendrix's interpretations of the British and U.S. national anthems, interpretations, at Woodstock and elsewhere, that disrupt their melodies with sound images of the violence that both nations perpetrate, performing a radical aesthetic and social critique of citizenship before bursting, sometimes along with his guitar, into flames.[18] Oiticica's project then becomes one of reactivation and replication of the social and aesthetic effects of such performances. His letters oscillate between descriptions that foreground the radical nature of those performances and various plans for resuscitating a radical potential to which those performances point but at which they never arrive. He tried to find the basis for something like a reactivation of what is potent in this music in the repetition within and across the sequence of things he heard in a radio broadcast that he recorded for Augusto de Campos. As he wrote to Vergara,[19]

> Today you turn on a rock radio station [and] it is an unbelievable thing! It is unbelievable! I am going one day to record a sequence of things one after the other, it is unbelievable! . . . It is a repetition of the very thing that repeats itself infinitely, it isn't a melody with beginning, middle and end and bá bá bá. . . . It is unbelievable! Because here . . . suddenly . . . this collective thing begins to rise, and it begins to rise and it does not rise wanting to impose that which was considered a preferential thing, it rises and begins to run and here that which is to invent, is invention, the invention becomes a becomes appropriated by the collective.[20]

What repeats is a seemingly interminably deferred beginning, a rehearsal prefatory to an experience that, suddenly, is not, while, at the same time, having a history, as if what is repeated is nothing other than this failure to emerge. It is as if what the collective reception of aesthetic individuation in the form Hendrix, the virtuoso, provides for Oiticica—just as the collective

reception of aesthetic individuation in the form of Chaplin, the tramp, provides for James—is the history, the repeated image, of what cannot come to pass. Participation, within the relay of authorship and reception, is mourning and expectation but never experience.

Citing another moment in which spectatorship and participation seem to converge, Oiticica notes,

> I have seen incredible things, once in Madison Square Garden there . . . the floodlights were on top of people, because now the craziest things happened, for example, I discovered in this Alice Cooper concert, the audience was the stage and vice versa, it is craziness! . . . It is very strange, all of the sudden the audience is all painted! . . . It has a face in the first row like something out of pantomime, all painted white and I was at that concert, all the people . . . with the painted face! With the body . . . an amazing invention! It seemed like a carnival! It is incredible, do you know how it is? Suddenly freedom, the body turns out to be this, to be an element of game, play. . . . And so I saw, I mean, they projected floodlights on top of the people and you see those arms looking like branches/perches on and on like that in the space, as if they were flying for the first time, do you understand?[21]

This "flying" is something like the permanent apotheosis he experienced in samba: "Rise, rise, rise, is always an apotheosis. . . . I adore this!"[22] But in rock, as opposed to samba, anyone can dance and thereby achieve this permanent apotheosis: "Rock in my view . . . liberates everything, including the initiation, the necessity of initiation, which is to say you initiate yourself and already its enough you are there. . . . Jimi Hendrix, man!"[23]

Participation, for Oiticica, for a time, took shape through the new collective experience of individuation inhabiting what he came to call "MUNDO-ABRIGO," or "World-Shelter," a concrete "cosmicity" structured by "the assumption of the power to invent" given in the freedom, and levitation, of individual bodies.[24] Like the Alice Cooper concert, it would require no specialized form of belonging, no "initiation," and could potentially include everyone, anyone whose ties to "earth" have been loosened, anyone who has been set adrift, in a motion that assumes the form of experimentation, of dance, of "inventive liberation of the capacities of play . . . INVENTION-PLAY."[25] While James envisions a condition in which the masses are now free and ready to listen to the artist, Oiticica transforms that vision so that,

having listened, each one of the masses becomes an artist, thereby achieving that liberation of the individual for which James calls.

Moreover, if it is an expansive, cosmetically induced whiteness that seems to transform and envelop the crowd at the Alice Cooper concert, enacting the anthropophagic tendencies that Oiticica recognizes in rock, it is Hendrix, the black man who "glides" black music, modernizing James's image of the preacher delivering his sermon to the newly freed, who is ultimately most emblematic of what Oiticica valorizes. In Oiticica's formulation, rock "glides" music that was rooted or grounded in the earth or "motherland," recombining it into a new, ascendant thing that makes possible a new experience of participation and belonging. But in his writing, after Woodstock and after the death of Hendrix, Oiticica seeks out the conditions under which this ephemeral experience might be repeated, when the event and the career that defined it are both irretrievably past: "It is a thing that in this way perhaps/suddenly arrived at a grandiosity of invention, it is a freedom. . . . It is a thing that just as soon doesn't exist anymore. . . . Woodstock, doesn't exist anymore."[26]

What remains is for Oiticica to move beyond his own serial exposure to the radical spirit of an age of flashing intermittence, which he thinks is already over, in a shift that James's trajectory prefigures. Because in spite of James's and Oiticica's best efforts to reimagine it, popular art in the United States or the mass art that they tried to conceive of as popular art offers, for the most part, a debased or incomplete form of participation in which audiences are unaligned with the culture that is supposed to be theirs. This leaves the audience frustrated, according to James, by works that impose on them a representation of the desire for individuation, and out of sync, according to Oiticica, with collective performances that the audience is, on the one hand, unprepared for and, on the other hand, unable to sustain. Such participation only replicates the limited and limiting structure of life in the modern state, within which people are led to desire a form of citizenship and subjectivity in which difference is individuated and submitted to an abstract equality that, in any case, can only be desired and never achieved. In the interest of unleashing unprecedented modes of cultural participation, James and Oiticica came to elaborate visions in which the traditional boundaries of the aesthetic and political realms dissolve in new social fields where a reconfigured notion of the work is situated alongside working, rather than reception, as its participatory correlate.

As much as James and Oiticica sought to live and work in the United States and to do so with legitimacy and security, their inability to obtain the legal right to do so only pointed up the limits of those legal rights and what they actually allow. Resigning themselves to the status of the noncitizen (signified by James's official designation as "alien" and in what Oiticica called his "subterranean" situation), each reaffirmed an identification with what is excluded in and by citizenship: that denigrated identity, that motleyness, which had been both telescoped and generalized into blackness in Trinidad and Brazil (telescoped insofar as it was linked to black people, generalized in that anyone could potentially become black through association) and which reappeared now, for James and Oiticica, in the reexpanded forms at the margins of revolutionary movement and avant-garde art scenes. For through the very vanguard formations of revolutionary politics and avant-garde art that James and Oiticica found so wanting, they each gained access to something beyond them, something that turned out to be vital and generative for them—contact with the very people whose criminalized modes of intramural sociality citizenship had defined itself against.

James talked to black intellectuals like Richard Wright, who were critical of revolutionary politics, and to rank-and-file industrial workers and miners. He also met with African American sharecroppers in southeastern Missouri in 1941 when sent by the Workers Party to help organize their impending strike. Instead of organizing them, or insisting they submit to being organized by union leaders in Chicago, James sought to understand the complex forms of organization they had already established. As James later recalled, "I found that of the seven or eight of them were people who, in addition to working in the cottonfields, were people who had organized around themselves a church. So here was an organization."[27] James also drew on the expressive practices nurtured in and by the church, when he helped the sharecroppers produce a list of their demands. Instead of suggesting what those demands should be, as was generally the practice in leftist parties (and, at this moment, as the United States was entering World War II, the suggestion made by most leftist parties was to abide loyally with the state's prohibition against such demands), James invited them to generate them. "I didn't write anything, none of them wrote it," James recalled. "They said what they thought and I put it together." Instead of composing, then, he transcribed and compiled their statements in a pamphlet titled "Down with Starvation Wages in South-East Missouri," in which the sharecroppers asked white

sharecroppers and a whole host of others to join them in their fight,[28] urging unity in the struggle against the landlords, despite pressure from landlords, including a lynching, to keep them apart. Indeed, James noted that this had the potential to become a motley effort, in that it included the quiet, sometimes even secret support of a few white sharecroppers who responded to their call.

Oiticica circulated in the queer underground of the art world, visiting the artist Jack Smith's studio, for example, and meeting with the actor and icon Mario Montez.[29] He also got to know "Karate Charlie," a member of the Ghetto Brothers street gang in the South Bronx whom he initially encountered through videotapes recorded by Oiticica's friend, the artist Martine Barrat. Moved by what he observed in Barrat's tapes, which, by eschewing the conventions of both video art and sociology, Oiticica notes, managed to avoid rendering the gang members as either actors or guinea pigs, involving them instead as fellow artists, Oiticica arranged to meet, face-to-face, with Karate Charlie himself. What attracted Oiticica was Charlie's use of language, "a richness of language unequaled," which is what Barrat's recordings had drawn out. Noting that the interview and video-recording practice Barrat established together with these teenagers illuminated that richness by provoking "continuous conversation-speech" and, at the same time, "unraveling" it and highlighting its various elements, he attempted to enter into that practice himself, seeking the company of these teenagers, in the Bronx, which he visited with Barrat, and in conversations with the people with whom Barrat had been working. Oiticica met with Charlie at Barrat's apartment, talking to him for hours, immersing himself in Charlie's language and sharing, in turn, the language of his old friends from Mangueira. This creative use of language, Oiticica argues, manifests itself in conversation, the mode of contact Barrat found and entered into in her South Bronx recordings and Oiticica's own extensions of them. It manifests itself in Charlie's efforts to establish peace between rival gangs through street parties that would set the scene for the emergence of hip hop and in Charlie's writings—among them a dictionary of South Bronx slang, offered as a key for understanding social life there—which Oiticica kept copies of in his files. That, Oiticica wrote in an article he sent back to Brazil, is what was of interest in New York in 1976, not the art world trends but the aesthetic sociality of the motley youth in the Bronx.

Such contact with those who were considered "traitors" or "deviants" and "criminals" by the state and whose work would typically be appropriated by and, at the same time, drowned out in vanguardist party policies or artistic trends proved critical for James and Oiticica. James's encounter affirmed the arguments he had already begun making: the autonomous insurgent efforts of African Americans and others must be supported on their own terms rather than subsumed within and redirected by the party's plans for a revolution by and for industrial workers and, further, that the role of the organizer is to write down and relay those terms, which might then catalyze other forms of revolutionary activity. Oiticica's encounter anchored his claim that "no little tendencies directed by artistic egos" are of interest in the United States.[30] Indeed, there are none worthy of note. What is of interest, instead, is not the new but the day, each day, in itself.[31] Barrat's recordings of conversations, "conversation of the day," among gang members were, for Oiticica, an "INSTRUMENT: OF THE DAY."[32] The "interference" created by her presence unraveled the conversation, and the richness of the language that emerged inspired Oiticica to initiate his own conversation or "rap of the DAY." What is significant to James and Oiticica in the sharecroppers' strike and in the gang members' "day" is given in the formal innovation and self-organization that conversation enacts and requires. Having recognized its importance, what James and Oiticica sought was not only to receive, not only to transmit, but also to enter into the intramural contact of those who were dispossessed not only of citizenship but also of the individuation that citizenship confers and consolidates. They desired, instead, contact, which they recognized as the condition of possibility for the insurgent and motley sociality of blackness and the condition of possibility for their involvement in it. In the context of their experiments along these lines, they imagined contact as a common penetrability or mutual incorporation that autoethnographic reception both models and obscures.

As we have seen, though Delany recognizes the way contact destabilizes a social order already stressed by class warfare in the production of other kinds of social relations that go against the networking that constitutes class warfare's grain, what he highlights, in his efforts to counter arguments about its dangers, is the way contact works to stabilize the social order. The new social relations that emerge from contact compensate for contact's destabilizing effects, eroticizing the civil hostility of class warfare. It is for this reason that Delany proposes that the state itself might participate in institutionalizing

that contact. James and Oiticica, who had been radicalized by the destabilizing effects of the kind of contact they experienced in Trinidad and Brazil, maintained, when seeking it out in the United States, an interest in its potential to generalize an unofficial, unsanctioned sociality that could never be legitimized by a state whose foreclosure it would effect. It was through the ongoing experimental construction of these very different types of "institutions" or apparatuses on the outskirts of the state—Correspondence and *Correspondence*, the organization and organ that developed out of discussions between James and others at a household that became a meeting space, and *Babylônests* and *Hendrixsts*, the open and accretive living and working spaces that Oiticica installed within his own apartments for himself and his many guests—that James and Oiticica attempted to invite and structure, however provisionally, this other sociality and to explore what might ensue.

The Correspondence Publishing Committee, or Correspondence, was an independent revolutionary organization whose primary focus was the production of its organ, *Correspondence*. *Correspondence* tried to record and establish connections between the spontaneous activities of the people at the bottom of society, which James had come to understand as a fundamentally revolutionary field. This attempt to cultivate insurgent intramural or intraclass contact was the occasion for interclass contact as well, insofar as *Correspondence* was the conduit through which organizers not endemic to the racial-class enclosure and composition of black aesthetic sociality sought to join it and, in so doing, relinquish their identities as organizers. Correspondence and *Correspondence* were conceived as alternatives to the revolutionary party and its organ, forms that James and those he worked with sought to reimagine in an attempt to "meet" the revolution that he and they believed was already under way.[33]

Correspondence was a collaborative effort. It developed out of the Johnson-Forest Tendency, which James (operating under the pseudonym J. R. Johnson) cofounded with his fellow Trotskyite Raya Dunayevskaya (aka Freddie Forest) in 1941. The Johnson-Forest Tendency formally established itself as a dissident faction—what Paul Buhle describes as "a 'total' faction, with its own ideas and support network"—within the Workers Party, the Trotskyite splinter of the Socialist Workers Party, which had invited James to the United States. The Tendency itself began as "an

enlarged study group composed largely of remarkable women." Loosely organized, Scott McLemee recounts, "around James intellectually and around a household [the home of Lyman and Freddie Paine] turned into a kind of radical salon."[34] As one participant, Grace Lee, recalled, "Together [the Paines] had a genius for hosting small gatherings where people form many different walks of life could eat, drink, hold far-reaching conversations, and listen to the music of Beethoven and Louis Armstrong. So their house at 629 Hudson Street became the kind of center that every political group needs—where revolutionary politics and culture flowed naturally into one another."[35] Though it only ever consisted of about sixty or seventy members, these members were bound by many, if often conflict-ridden, friendships and sexual associations that developed among them, over the course of their ongoing collaborations. James himself married two of the women in the group, first Constance Webb, with whom he had a child, and then later, Selma Weinstein, who joined James in England after he was forced to leave the United States, but he had, as Webb later reported, many affairs with other women in the group, and was often aided and abetted in pursuing such affairs by other members of the group who resented and resisted the extraction from contact and the privatization of sociality that marriage imposed.[36] The Paine household became, then, not just a salon, but also a workplace. It was also where James stayed until marrying Constance Webb and setting up a household of his own. Then that household too became a hub for group activity, despite Webb's best efforts to maintain it as an expressly private domestic space, with visitors barging in, joining them even in the bathroom, disrupting the heteronormative intimacy that she had hoped marriage would secure. But this was an intimacy that, as one of James's lovers explained to him, most of the women in the group found isolating and unsatisfying. Indeed, the need for the complete reorganization of domestic life became a central feature of the reorganization of association they imagined, for, as James's wife noted, "Freddy [Paine] was an excellent cook and good hostess, but she resented always being in the tiny kitchen out of earshot while [others, including other women] sat at the table in the front room holding lengthy political discussions."[37] Cooking, child care, and all of the typing were among those aspects of domesticity, which James's third wife, Selma James, would later recast as work, arguing for wages for housework, in need of restructuring.

The members of the Tendency were also bound to their commitment to intense collective study. In coauthored articles, pamphlets, and books, the members of the Tendency explored the central theoretical premises of Marxism and the necessity for revolutionary transformation. The members critically reconsidered the way revolution had been pursued in the Soviet Union, by pro-Soviet revolutionary parties operating in the United States at that time, and by the Workers Party itself, arguing that what the Soviet Union under Stalin had achieved was neither the fulfillment of socialism nor a perversion of it but rather an extension, by way of centralization, of capitalism. Through systematic practices, they argued, its authoritarian and, as such, fundamentally counterrevolutionary "state capitalism" perpetuated and intensified the alienation of labor and "the world tendency to the complete mechanization of men."[38] The remedy, James and other members of the Tendency insisted, would be worker control of production through radically democratic self-organization. Indeed, their claim—for which they were widely mocked—that the international revolution that the vanguard parties sought to lead had already begun, was based on the evidence of the creative, revolutionary self-organization that they perceived and pointed to all around them, within the United States and beyond. The U.S. proletariat was not backward, as many vanguard parties claimed; it was already in the midst of implementing socialism. They insisted, moreover, that autonomous black liberation struggles were critical, indeed indispensible, to this revolution. In James's capacity as adviser to the Trotskyite movement and to Trotsky himself on the "Negro Question," James had argued that, far from needing to be subordinated to and subsumed within the "workers'" movement, the autonomous endeavors of African Americans could catalyze and transform that movement. The Tendency as a whole expanded on this argument by also emphasizing the fundamental contributions to be made by the radical activities of women and youth. The identification of African Americans, women, and youth—people whose struggles were not reducible to questions of work in the strict sense—as not just coinciding with but fundamental to the proletarian revolution suggested a radical expansion of the notions of work and the worker as revolutionary subject and ultimately (if not quite yet) an unraveling of the very idea of a revolutionary subject itself.

What this expansive, simultaneously local and international collectivity needed, members of the Tendency asserted, was not the "plenty for all" that

the Workers Party proposed or that the unions, co-opted by capital and the state, would demand that workers accept. What they needed, in the context of an increasingly authoritarian and alienating industrial workplace that had rendered them mere cogs in machines and of a "speed up" that was gradually breaking them down, was to be free in their own creative activities—in their work but also in their quotidian associations both in and beyond work—to establish new social arrangements.[39] These workers, moreover, did not need to be led or "organized" by any centralizing bureaucratic institution—not the welfare state, not the unions, and especially not any vanguard party. Confident that this retheorized worker or proletariat would "find its method of proletarian organization," James announced that "organization as we have known it is at an end. The task is to abolish organization. The task is to teach, to illustrate, to develop spontaneity—the free creative activity of the proletariat."[40] This critical position forced the members of the Tendency, particularly those who understood themselves to be "intellectuals" or leaders, to reimagine their own revolutionary praxis. How could they take up the task James outlined? How could they, as old guard, vanguard theoreticians and organizers, contribute to a movement that had already proceeded without them? These became central questions for the members of the Tendency who, in 1951, after briefly rejoining the Socialist Workers Party in 1947, broke away from the Trotskyite movement and from revolutionary party politics altogether to form their own organization, Correspondence, in resistance to the very idea of organization.

Correspondence, named for the Committees of Correspondence that had helped coordinate the efforts of the first American Revolution, was directed toward supporting the efforts of the second American Revolution. It sought, first and foremost, to attune itself to the insurgent activities that the group members took to be the most vital at the time: those involving workers in the most expansive and reconstructive sense. As Grace Lee,[41] operating under the pseudonym Ria Stone, who had been a crucial contributor to the theoretical work of the Tendency and who was considered by many members to be its third leader, later recounted, "We were convinced that by being in tune with what the American workers were thinking and doing we had become part of the continuing historical movement of those at the bottom of society to take control over their own lives."[42] Such attunement began with contact with the vibrant sociality that emerged in and around the industrial plant. It

was on the assembly line, in the line's temporal and spatial interstices (both those found and those made) and at its edge, at the places where people congregated after hours, that the group found evidence of the "free creative activity of the proletariat," the revolution in progress, in explicit acts of rebellion, most notably in the unsanctioned and illegal wildcat strikes celebrated by the group but also in many other smaller, subtler, quotidian practices. The industrial plant was at this time, Lee later recalled, a "very lively place," a place where, for the first time, all kinds of people, particularly people "at the bottom of society," came together, forging the kinds of new associations and new modes of association the group had valorized.[43] Lee's description emphasizes the excitement that characterized this coming together:

> Life in New York and all over the United States was exhilarating during World War II. . . . Because of the March on Washington movement Americans of all ethnic groups worked side by side in the defense plants. Women left their kitchens and offices to work on the assembly lines. Radicals and intellectuals seized the opportunity to become "proletarianized." So the workforce became a new mix of whites, blacks, Latinos, Asians, women and men, ex-farmers, intellectuals, and radicals, each with their own experiences and their own views on what was going on in the world. People from different backgrounds exchanged stories of where they had come from and how they viewed their lives, lent each other books, went bowling and drinking after work. The plant was like one big school. This was the first time in U.S. history that racial, educational, sex, class, and age barriers had ever been broken down to such a degree. . . .
>
> There were abundant opportunities for socializing. In some plants during hunting season workers thought nothing of bringing in a bear or deer to roast and share. In my plant in Brooklyn, we conducted Negro history study groups during our coffee breaks, straggling back to our places after the bell rang. There was so much we had to learn from each other.[44]

Correspondence, which resituated itself amid the plants in Detroit,[45] embodied and extended this coming together in a multiethnic and multilingual membership that included Dunayevskaya, a Russian immigrant; Lee, the daughter of Chinese immigrants who could read and write German; Lyman Paine, a wealthy white architect, and his wife, Freddy, who had been a waitress and union organizer; and African American plant workers James Boggs, Si Owens and Martin Glaberman, Filomena Daddario, Nettie

Kravitz, Constance Webb and Selma Weinstein (who became James's second and third wives), the scholar William Gorman, Andy Phillips, and Saul Blackman, among numerous others who participated in the group over the years. James had to rely on them to act as his "transmission belts" to the new sociality insofar as it was linked to a labor process that he, as an undocumented immigrant, only intermittently shared. As Lee further recounts, "Black, white, Asian, and Chicano, workers and intellectuals, living on the East Coast, West Coast, and in the Midwest, we were a representative sample of the new human forces that were emerging in the United States during World War II." and Correspondence sought to consolidate the dispersed and at times even clashing forces that Lee describes through a new form.[46] Finding "a form whereby new social forces manifest themselves" was and is, at crucial social turning points, essential, Lee later explained, "you have to introduce new ideas into your structure, and to do this you have to find new forms. Organizing is when . . . you create that form."[47] Finding or creating the right form would require, and would itself constitute, an experimental practice. The form for Correspondence would emerge, they hoped, not through an imposition of organizational models from outside but the development of the kind of organization already inherent in the activities of these forces. Correspondence, then, was an experimental reorganization of organization. The new form that the group sought would be a form for generating and structuring contact both among and with the forces they sought to bring together.

What Correspondence took to be its central task (in an attempt to approximate what James had proposed) was the production of a new type of organ, the *Correspondence* newspaper, which would be headed by a worker (its first editor was the Ford plant worker Johnny Zupan) and which, unlike the organs of the revolutionary parties, would not simply tell workers what to think and do but record and relay what they were already thinking and doing. Correspondence and *Correspondence* would attempt "to teach, illustrate and develop 'spontaneity'" by documenting what they perceived to be the revolutionary nature of even the most quotidian phenomena. As Dunayevskaya wrote in one of the paper's early columns, "The pages of *Correspondence* are dedicated to making the experience of the second America, an experience out [of] which a new way of life is being born, known to the world. This is what America has that the world needs. Not the swimming pools and television sets, not the foreign policy of Dulles or the military

might of the Pentagon, but the day to day life of the people, their hostility to the bureaucracy, the way in which new talents and new energies are rising."[48] The "day to day life of the people" constitutes, as one of its early articles (often attributed to James but, significantly, unsigned) suggests, a "workers' culture," an aesthetic sociality that includes, but also exceeds, the reception of popular art forms, in and through which the "worker" expressed himself: "His relations with his fellow humans on the job, his relations with his neighbors, the kind of house he lives in, what he does in his spare time, the movies he sees, the things he likes or dislikes . . . These things are his free expression of his ideas and desires as much as if he were to sit down and write about them, a thing he rarely does."[49]

Attuning to such ideas and desires, discerning spontaneous revolutionary activities and the correspondences between them, would require a highly sensitive organ that could enable in its readers a heightened and more vigilant sensual experience of the world. Its models would be the "eagle eye" with which "to watch . . . every change or indication of the things that these changes reflect" and the "experienced and open ear" with which "to find out not only what people say but what need is implied by what they say and genuinely concentrate on what they say, relating it to others."[50] It would also require a new form of writing—or correspondence—that would break down the division, not just between organizers, in the old sense, and workers, in the old sense, but between intellectual workers and worker-intellectuals, between vanguardist intellectuality and the intellectuality expressed in "workers' culture." As Lee further recalls,

> To prepare ourselves for the publication of *Correspondence* we organized a school where members of four groups identified as the new revolutionary social forces would be the teachers and the old members and intellectuals would be the students, ready with "full fountain pens" to write down the views of our "teachers." We called it the Third Layer School, based on Lenin's efforts in 1921 to mobilize a "third layer" of workers and peasants because the first layer of Bolshevik leaders and the second layer of trade unionists had not been sufficient to keep state capitalism from overtaking the fledgling workers' state.[51]

The students of this school would become correspondents, assuming the role of manual laborers in the most literal sense, ready, as Lee relates, "with 'full fountain pens' to write down the views of their 'teachers,'" not unlike

James had done in Missouri or even before then in the barrack yards of Port of Spain, those ideas and desires that were otherwise so rarely recorded. In documenting and publishing them and in attempting to offer a theoretical framework for understanding them, the group hoped to facilitate the discovery of parallels and relations—correspondences—between activities within this revolutionary "workers' culture" (among the autonomous liberation struggles of rank-and-file industrial workers, African Americans, women, and youth), and between these activities and liberation movements around the world. Correspondence/*Correspondence* hoped to make possible not only new forms of organization but a deconstruction of the body politic, by way of correspondence in every possible sense, through a generative, intramural communication between the dispersed insurgent elements that constituted the remains of the motley crew.

After a two-year trial run of mimeographed issues, *Correspondence* was formally launched in October 1953. Kent Worcester describes the remarkable diversity of the first issue:

> A memorable inaugural issue opened with a column written in the first person by Charles Denby, entitled "Workers Journal." The front page also featured a sympathetic discussion of Lucille Ball's appearance in front of the House Un-American Activities committee as a friendly witness . . . and a long statement by the paper's first editor, Johnny Zupan. . . . Inside Correspondence were articles on conditions at Detroit's Ford Rouge plant, a report from the coal fields, a couple of cartoons, editorial comment on the Kinsey Report, a review of the movie *From Here to Eternity*, and columns on "How We Beat the Boss," "Young Guys and Gals," and "In this Corner"—about sports. Later issues examined baseball, the Western movie *Shane*, race relations, the United Auto Workers, the 1954 Supreme Court ruling on desegregation, and a section on "Why Workers Don't Read." As its unusual combination of interests made clear, the paper was very much absorbed in the fabric of everyday life.[52]

The paper looked like a newspaper, with headlines and columns, comics, and even classified ads. By way of the "full fountain pen" method of writing, members brought a variety of perspectives into the paper. As Lee recalls, "Johnny Zupan, a Ford worker, was the worker-editor who wrote a column titled 'Workers Journal.' Jimmy [Boggs] wrote a column titled 'The Half That Hasn't Been Told.' He was also the comrade chiefly responsible for

reporting what people in the plant and the community were saying for the six columns of 'Readers Views,' the main feature distinguishing our newsletter from other radical papers."[53] It was a public forum for commenting on current affairs and on ongoing social struggles, their historical precedents and international counterparts. At the same time, however, it was quite intimate. News stories as well as columns were written in the first person, in an informal, conversational style, recounting personal experiences replete with affect. They captured a sense of rage and humiliation but also a sense of humor and genuine enthusiasm for sharing knowledge, strategies, and ideas.

Articles such as "How Women Manage" took up the question of how "the wife of a working man" has to "manage" the household when the paycheck that her husband receives never fully covers monthly expenses, and "Women in the Last Depression" looked frankly at the basic assumptions of gender roles by examining the reversal of those roles during the unemployment of the Great Depression. Other articles such as "Old Folks Want Active Part" and "Today's Youth" sought to make these neglected and misunderstood generations more sympathetic. Strongly worded editorials such as "The Farce of Brotherhood Week" addressed racial politics in the United States, critiquing in this case the celebratory tone of "Negro History Week," and explaining what "few whites can understand." The most compelling articles, however, are the first-person diaristic accounts of people's experiences at work. In "When You Have to Draw the Line," a secretary recalls rallying the courage to talk back to her boss when he asked someone to ask her to stop singing (which she did, she explains, in order to "break the monotony"). "Diary of a Teacher," in which a teacher describes being struck by the insight of a custodial worker who had noticed how children are affected by teachers' preferences in thermostat settings.

The paper also included a section titled "In Support of Our Press" that reports on various events that extend from the efforts of the paper and attempt to draw in new audiences and new correspondents. In the March 1958 issue, for example, accounts are given of a public meeting on "the crisis in education" that led to another meeting and the formation of a committee to arrange further meetings; a series of talks given by "our speaker" Filomena Daddario on "popular music and politics"; a St. Valentine's Dance in Detroit with entertainment and refreshment provided by the Jolly Ten and the East Side Editing Committee, that was both a fundraiser and a mixer. The section includes direct appeals for support, in both a subscription form

and a statement: "We are encouraged to repeat the point [made in the February editorial statement of the organization's finances produced by committee members in New York, Los Angeles, and Detroit]: 'So that is the situation in a nutshell. we need the weekly—but we also need the money.'" It also welcomes the reprinting without permission of any article that appears in the paper.

While the various issues are lively and engaging, Correspondence/*Correspondence* was in a state of constant crisis, continually reformulating itself in response. In the context of McCarthy-era repression, the organization struggled to keep the organ going, first as a weekly, then a semimonthly, then a monthly tabloid. Because Correspondence had been deemed a subversive organization by the U.S. government, *Correspondence* was denied second-class mailing status by the United States Postal Service. One issue was even deemed "unmailable," as its expressions of sympathy for the shop-floor rebellion were judged to be inciting "murder and assassination."[54] The paper ran at a huge deficit and had to be subsidized. It had very few subscribers—probably one hundred at the most—and thousands of copies began piling up in the back room of the group's office.

At the same time, membership in the organization was perpetually in flux. It was cemented together by friendships and sexual relationships between members. But the complex, often criss-crossing interactions between them, interactions that strain against the logic of heteronormative sociality (suggesting, perhaps, that we might think of this Tendency in relation to the kind of noncompliant or deviant "tendency" Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick theorizes), produced many conflicts as well.[55] Meanwhile, "worker" members, particularly African Americans, women, and youth, when not remaining altogether aloof, drifted in and out of the organization, participating erratically.

As members argued about how to proceed and how to realize their initial aspirations, Correspondence eventually broke down in a series of major splits. The first occurred in 1956 when Correspondence's acting "leader," Dunayevskaya, and others, including editor Johnny Zupan, left to form their own paper, *News and Letters*, taking half the organization's personnel and all its equipment with them. The second split occurred in 1962 when most of the founding members, including Grace Lee, Lyman and Freddie Paine, Filomena Daddario, and Jimmy Boggs, cut ties with James and left the organization. Those few who had sided with James continued their work, with

the journal and the organization operating under the name Facing Reality, until the new editor, Martin Glaberman, decided, over James's objections, that it was no longer viable.

Correspondence was an experiment in social organization. While the group established a provisional, literary form for its organ, which it struggled to maintain despite the reductions in the frequency of its publication and the breadth of its distribution, it was unable to find a satisfactory form for the organization itself. What would an organization that rearranged, even erased the divisions between the first, second, and third layers of society look like when it was dedicated to acknowledging the priority and supporting the efforts of the "third layer"—not imposing organizational principles determined by the first layer on that third layer but allowing it to find and disseminate its own method of organization? How could the intramural contact of workers be maintained and fostered in its autonomy, and how would extramural contact between the different layers of this movement operate? What would be the role of James, an intellectual and an old Bolshevik, whose distance from these forces was redoubled not only by his detachment from the labor process that had initially brought many members of the organization together but also by his forced departure from the United States just as the organ began to be published as a newspaper?

The group's agonizing attempts to create a new social form took shape across a plethora of internal documents: the meeting minutes, memoranda, letters both open and secret, within and from the New York, Los Angeles, Detroit and other offices and London, where James had moved. Rather than in its official organ or in its sanctioned political activities, it is in and through these unofficial documents, which address the constraints and contradictions that keep the organization from ever coming into its own, that the organization most fully came to life.[56]

Consider, for example, this memo, penned by "Cartwright" (aka Selma Weinstein, who later became Selma James, James's third wife), found among the archival remains of an organization in the midst of formulating a theory of organization. It seeks an understanding of the necessary and difficult relation between intramural and extramural contact, groping for an answer to the question of how revolutionary intellectuals such as James might come into democratic, nonhegemonic contact with the already-extant contact that animates the remains of the motley crew, for an answer to the question of what form of organization might make this possible. For Cartwright, the

ideal that James had once articulated remained clear: "An organization is a form and a body of ideas for that form to carry out. [The worker] cannot only contribute to those ideas. He must have moulded that form."[57] But the group had not yet managed to develop any protocols for such a "moulding." Its founders wanted to incorporate workers and workers' ideas or proposals. The incorporation they envisioned would exceed contributing or adding on to what was already established. It would, instead, be the basis for the radical reformulation they envisioned not only of the provisional structure of the dissident Tendency that had been operating inside a political party but of the very idea of organization, which turns out to be nothing less than "the every day life of the group" (22). The ambivalence within the organization, not just on the part of workers who were not sure if they wanted to contribute their ideas but also, as this memo clearly registers, on the part of the old guard that was not sure if it wanted to incorporate their ideas, which were sometimes so different that they seemed to the old guard to be simply "ridiculous," is striking, even within the pages of this one memo.[58]

What was required, it would seem, was not just "full fountain pen" transcription but some form of translation. "[The worker] is often incapable of proposing, yet from these proposals we have to find the stem and meaning and the goal, what his ideas are, on society and the organization as well" (25). However, "what he says, right or wrong, has a validity and it is up to the leadership to make those concrete proposals which would be an expression of what he is for and what he is against. When he hears the proposal, he sits back and says, 'That's what I mean, that's what I mean'" (23). Alternatively, what might be required is simply a greater openness on the part of the old guard, to whom this memo appears primarily to be addressed: " . . . by far not all the concrete proposals that workers come up with are ridiculous. Some are terrific. Try them. Don't just toss them aside because they are new and untried. Some of our people, the young ones even, act so old. They act as if, if they do anything wrong, it can't ever be fixed. They act like they are going by a set of laws and the whole world depends on a single mistake" (23).

Openness to difference was fundamental to the project, and that demanded experimentation; only through experimentation, through trial and error, would they be able arrive at the kind of organizational form they desired but were not yet able to produce. Without it, the contact on which the organization depended would dissolve: "unless we lose this conservativism and begin to look for new methods, the criticism of workers will turn from

being within the framework of the organization to standing aside of it and attacking it" (25). The ideas of the old guard still provided the "framework" for this new form, however provisional that default form may still have been. The organization could not do without workers, but the organizers, unable fully to abolish their identity and function as organizers, proceeded as if it could not do without the old guard either, thereby continually both expressing and enacting a fundamental problem regarding the paradoxical nature of revolutionary organization. And yet they persisted in their efforts: "The newness of the paper is thrilling. We say open the paper and the door of the organization to those who don't give a damn about organizations. And those are the people who know dozens of people like themselves. They are waiting for us to open our doors to their friends" (35).

Clearly, for Cartwright, the "newness" of the project would emerge from the contact it created, however much the structure of that contact remained in question. The organization's commitment to contact was reaffirmed in another memo, written by "Neff" (aka Lyman Paine) in 1956, in the context of the reinitiation of *Correspondence* after the group's first big split. In order to proceed with the process, Neff writes, "Now what we have to do is find and establish contact with the audience which we know the paper can have and must have," further observing, "we are building up a periphery, an immediate outside audience for that paper. . . . Each of us is a direct link to the outside audience. Because our paper is based upon the impulse of the outside, everybody is a transmission belt."[59] Such contact would exceed participation in meetings. Again, organization was understood in the broadest possible terms. If the last memo associated it with "the every day life of the group," into which workers were to be incorporated, this one insists that it must necessarily include entering into and "living in the community" alongside workers, part of them, in their struggles with them:

> Up to now we have tended to go to only one class or only to one section of the class, particularly the Negro. This is a form of limitation on our creativity and also on the creativity of the person whom we are meeting. We have to have a national audience, though based on the deepest layer of the working class. How many of us have intellectual friends on one side and Negro and worker friends on the other and we see them separately? We refuse to recognize that the middle class intellectual is yearning precisely for a link to the mass.

> We lead a sort of double life; one part in politics, another part living in the community. Some among us have taken on the aspect not only of not representing the organization but of not even representing themselves. They hold themselves back. It is a form of cheating on the organization, on themselves and on their neighbors. It is a question of living a life that one is proud of. It is not a matter of seeing it as taking place in a society in movement of which one is part. It is not a matter of analyzing people and using them. We have to be part of them, particularly in their struggles with them.[60]

They continued to grope, however, for a way to achieve this. What the group lacked, or felt they lacked, many of these documents suggest, was a clear "perspective." As another internal memo summarizes, "Organizationally we are in the closest possible relation with . . . Detroit [workers]. . . . We are in the closest possible contact with the Negro community. . . . We are in close touch with [the middle] classes. In the face of these possibilities, however, the organization has not yet been able to crystallize a perspective."[61]

The perspective that proved so elusive would, they hoped, merely be a point of connection, a basis for the fuller, deeper contact and incorporation they desired both with and within the insurgent sociality they found in "workers' culture" (in Detroit but also worldwide, in Ghana and Hungary and elsewhere). It would enable the organ to become a means not just for attaining a heightened sensory perception but also for resolving the problem of incorporation, not through assimilation or even translation but through a kind of reciprocal "penetration" in which the questions of prospective subscribers are met by the penetrating politics of the organ/ization:

> As we learn how to see the politics around us in our everyday life I think we will begin to see it too in the daily events that are in the public eye, and the reactions of the people to them. Then we will go from being just a paper to a newspaper with datelines on the articles. Not like the Mil. [Militant] which told workers who to support and sympathize with, but always alongside of them in what they do, and how they feel about events, always perceiving and penetrating with our politics.
>
> No one knows what the workers will do. But whatever they do, in this way we will be a part of it in our own special way. Because of us they may do it a little better and a few more may do it. I think in that lies the key to

answering the penetrating questions of prospective subscribers, "What is the purpose of the paper and the organization?"[62]

This clear and stable perspective would be the basis for the form they were seeking, providing a framework or structure that would be the fulcrum for the radical activities they valorized. As they stated earlier and restated in one form or another throughout the life of the organization, "Individual contacts by us will be only the beginning and not the end of the process."[63] And while they never quite got to the end, never quite finding "the" form or the kind of form they desired, either for the organization or for the organ, they maintained an intense dedication to this difficult and contentious process, in a steady stream of proposals for new approaches.

The *Ninhos* or Nests (sometimes called "Nest-Cells" or "Leisure-Cells") were structures or environments in which people were invited to enter, pass through, or seclude themselves—together. Generally appearing in clusters, they assumed the form of "crawl in–lie down structures" (to be activated differently than the "manipulating touch-structures," such as the "CAPES to be dressed [in]," for example, that Oiticica had been creating for the *Parangolé*).[64] They emerged in the context of the public exhibitions that Oiticica produced after leaving Brazil, developing into an alternative to the very idea of the exhibition and the particular engineering of sociality and social space that the exhibition implies and enacts.

While the Nests constitute an extension of many of the experiments in environmentation that Oiticica had pursued, the first instantiation of works he specifically called "Nest" appeared as a component within *Eden*, the large-scale installation Oiticia produced for the Whitechapel Gallery in London or, as he preferred to call it, "the Whitechapel experiment." Oiticica's drawn plans for this exhibition show that the Nests consisted of six "cells," large wooden boxes open at the top, grouped together on the floor in a rectangular configuration. The wooden walls of the cells were a little less than waist-high, and there were steps placed on each side of the rectangle they formed together. Larger "walls" were created, however, out of sheer fabric panels hung from the ceiling around the edges of the Nests. These panels enclosed the Nests but could be drawn aside, like curtains, so that people could enter in. According to Guy Brett, the British art critic who helped organize the exhibition, while "Hélio suggested that there should always be

things to cover people and material to lie on: for example, 'one of the cells could have straw from the bottom to its middle and a rubber sac for the participant to get inside,'" he also invited people to add to these things. As Brett recalls, "people could bring whatever materials they liked to make a nest for themselves, habitable and personal."[65] The poet Edward Pope recalls that the Nests were hardly used at *Éden*. He himself explored them, however, bringing in copies of his own poems to use as building material. He says little of his experience of nesting within them but recounts that the Nest itself facilitated an indirect encounter: after leaving and leaving his poems behind, he overheard the Nests' next occupants, excited by the poems, reading them aloud to one another.[66]

Oiticica further developed the idea of the Nest while briefly in residence at the University of Sussex University in 1969, building a multistoried structure in which students were invited to hang out. These Nests were composed of stacked open frames with canvas panels attached at the top of each side, giving occupants the option of letting them down to create the effect of a wall and enclose the space or lifting them up to create doors or windows. Photographs taken of these Nests show various usages: a man walking on top of one Nest, a person sitting inside with one of the canvas panels folded to create a half wall / half opening, and three people sitting together inside a completely enclosed Nest gathered around some loosely knotted hanging ropes. The multiple uses suggest that the Nests set the stage for many forms of inhabitation.

Oiticica continued to develop the idea of the Nest in his contribution to the historic *Information* exhibition at New York's Museum of Modern Art in 1970.[67] For this exhibition, Oiticica built a series of Nests like the ones he had produced for Sussex University but a more expansive one, including more enclosures, laid out and stacked in a hive-like formation. The canvas panels that covered them had pleats that gave them a more tailored, formal appearance, but they did not cover the entire wooden frame, which was left open on the top story to form a kind of balcony. These Nests generated many users and uses. Photographs of them show people ascending ladders, climbing to crawl into the enclosures, individually and in groups that became larger in the Nests that formed the balcony, where people sat perched around the rim looking out onto the museum. These photographs do not show what went on inside the Nests, however, in the various groupings that formed there; these were not on display, although reportedly a couple was discovered having sex

inside one of the structures. If the "total *Parangolé* experience" had been structured around a cycle of activating (carrying, entering, or wearing) and watching, the experience here allowed for some pockets of privacy. The artist Vito Acconci, who attended the exhibit, later recalled the complex experience of the intimacy made possible in this seemingly public space:

> There was a space for people! No one had thought about a space for people in terms of art. There were places in the middle of this public space that could be these private spaces. It was possible to have space for one or two people. He [Oiticica] was making small compartments—nests where people could remain. . . . He had an interesting notion of public space. It was not only for a large number of people, it was composed of private spaces. His work was about the conjunction of privacies. You could have your privacy and have a person at your side, you could have social contact.[68]

As the Nests developed in the contexts of these public exhibitions, they became increasingly hospitable, secluded but outward facing, both private and social in their orientation. The forms of these early Nests and the forms of sociality that emerged in and from them were the starting point for the Nests that Oiticica was to build within the New York apartments where he lived and worked after he elected to stop formally exhibiting objects.

As experiments in environmentation, the Nests were an outgrowth of Oiticica's ongoing rethinking of the status of the work of art. If in painting he had moved beyond the figure and frame toward an understanding of the work of art as an object, through the *Parangolé*, he had begun to shift his focus from the object as an end in itself to the interaction between spectator and object. He went even further in this thinking, reformulating his ideas while still in Brazil, through the idea of the "Supra-sensorial." As he explained,

> The most important proposition of the object, of the makers of objects, in my view, would be that of a new perceptual behaviour, created through increasing spectator participation, eventually overcoming the object as the end of aesthetic expression. For me, in my development, the object was a passage to experiences increasingly engaged with the individual behaviour of each spectator: I must insist that the search, here, is not for a "new conditioning" of the participator but an overturning of every conditioning in the quest for individual liberty, through increasingly

> open propositions, aimed at making each person find within themselves, through accessibility, through improvisation, their internal liberty, the path for a creative state.[69]

Oiticica's desire was for the participator to arrive at a "supra-sensation" that would stimulate this creative activity. This would entail "dispensing with even the object as it has come to be categorized," by generating creative exercises through what he envisioned as increasingly open propositions: "These are not painting-sculpture-poem fusions, palpable works, though they may exhibit this aspect; they are directed at the senses in order that, through them, through total perception, they may lead the individual to a 'suprasensation,' to the expansion of his usual sensory capacities, to the discovery of his internal creative centre, of his dormant expressive spontaneity, linked to the quotidian."[70] This awakening, akin to the awakening Oiticica had experienced through samba, would have a revolutionary effect, at least at the level of individual behavior: "This entire experience into which art flows, the issue of liberty itself, of the expansion of the individual's consciousness, of the return to myth, the rediscovery of a rhythm, dance, the body, the senses, which finally are what we have as weapons of direct, perceptual, participatory knowledge, . . . represents the liberation from those prejudices of social conditioning to which the individual is subject. The stance, then, is revolutionary in the total sense of behaviour."[71]

Oiticica sought to enlarge this revolutionary effect. In a 1968 letter to Guy Brett, Oiticica refers again to the idea of an "increasingly open proposition," though here that openness is pointed beyond individual behavior and toward the idea of a new community: "I feel that the idea grows into a necessity of a new community, based on creative affinities, despite cultural or intellectual differences, or social and individual ones. Not a community to 'make new works of art,' but something as the experience in real life—all sorts of experiences that could grow out in a new sense of life and society—kind of constructing an environment for life itself based on the premise that creative energy is inherent in everyone."[72] As an anchor for the new community, the proposition, however open, would require a form, an embodiment of some sort:

> In its whole this idea would be that of a kind of open space, environment for experience, for creative experience of every imaginable sort. I don't want anymore to detach my experience from real life. All my experience

> in Mangueira, with people of all sorts, taught me that social and individual differences are the cause for unhappiness—I had some ideas that I thought were too abstract, but suddenly they became real: creativity is inherent to everyone, the artist would just inflame it, put fire, free people from their conditioning—the old way of looking at the artist as someone intangible is dead; it has no new connotations with life today—individual manifestation has only one justification, that is to be a creative one, apart from all egoism or closed individuality. Of course those ideas are a beginning of something I don't know what would be, they have to be embodied.[73]

Oiticica planned to embody this new "community" in and across different bodies, through a project he referred to as *Barracão*, from *barraco* (meaning "shack" or "shed"), a term used by favela residents to describe their dwellings that placed them, conceptually, within the history of slavery. The project was articulated as an aspiration more than a concrete plan, one to which Oiticica often returned throughout his sojourn in the United States. His search for the project's proper form resulted in numerous experiments, in which he expanded and, ultimately, exploded the idea in "MUNDO-ABRIGO" (World-Shelter) and later an even more diffuse "ambulatory delirium," finding its form in the world at large, while at the same time recalling its origins in his exploration of the improvised shelters of the favelas.

The name *barraco* or *barracão*, Oiticica insists, does not call for a literal appropriation of the form of the favela dwelling but the experience of space it suggested. As opposed to the square or block house, "urban with divided space and with specified functions, etc." that Marshall McLuhan, whom Oiticica had been reading, describes as a central feature of European modernity, the *Barracão* offered, again, as Oiticica had already noted in his "Fundamental Bases for the Definition of the Parangolé," a more fluid form. It offered "nondivision," an "organic connection within the diverse functional parts of the internal-external space of itself."[74] In the favela, he notes, "the sequence of *BARRACÕES* is at times called a train in an identification that signifies more the space of the train (that could be that of the airplane etc.)."[75] This other experience of space as nondivision suggesting movement or flight pointed him toward the formation of a new type of environmental space that would also "coalesce" a new type of activity, grounded, crucially, in leisure and pleasure: "there is therefore in my idea of *BARRACÃO* this

initial exigency about environmental-space: to create a space-environment-leisure/pleasure that would coalesce a type of activity that does not fragment in preconditioned structures."[76] The type of structure or environmental space (we might recall here Oiticica's definition of the *Parangolé* as "color-structure in space" or environmental manifestation) would be responsive to such activity and the community that would collectively undertake it:

> *BARRACÃO* would not be something that could be reduced to "experimental architecture" but as a transformable structure according to the experimental activities of a determined group or likewise of an individual (that would be supreme irony); *BARRACÃO* would be **the experimental model of leisure/pleasure** as positive activity: 'this activity would be linked in origin to the necessity of taking by assault **behavior** as principal active element in the experimentality-nucleus.[77]

If the idea of *Barracão* began, then, with another idea of structure, the idea of a "community" forged across various vectors of difference, bound by creative affinities or by participation in contiguous or common creative practices that seek to uncondition behavior, it continued with the task of finding the right form for a structure that is also a practice, a structure that is formed through a practice, that is finally inseparable and indistinguishable from this practice.

Oiticica initially envisioned undertaking this experimental project in and for Brazil but came to believe that he could not carry it out in that repressive context. As he began to reconceive it, he imagined it as nothing less than the structure of everyday life, whose form cannot be anticipated, an adaptable structure, an "open circumstance" that could be set up anywhere.[78] This is what he imagines as MUNDO-ABRIGO, or World-Shelter. *Barracão* had to be pursued elsewhere, finally (if only even temporarily and provisionally) embodied or materialized in and through other projects such as the Nests. The Nests or Nest-cells offer a context in which the community envisioned in *Barracão* can begin to grow. As Oiticica later recalled, "The idea of the Nests began there [London] and with them I arrived as if it were the limit of everything: the need to develop more and more something that would be extra-exhibition, extra-work, more than a participating object, a context for behavior, for life; the Nests propose an idea of multiplication, reproduction, communal growth.[79] Oiticica continued to theorize this notion in his contribution to the catalogue for the *Information* show at the Museum of

Modern Art in New York, where, he notes, "of course these are still introductory propositions for a much wider aim : the total communal-cell activity." If they concentrate immediately on individual situations, that is only their starting point: "They exist as a plan for a practice : . . . an open plan that can be expanded, gr o o o ow."[80] It is simply a matter of creating the conditions of possibility for this community to form on its own. This community would not be tethered to any motherland but would develop, instead, from its own self-generated mother-cell: "I form the matrix-cell of *Barracão*; but its behaviour and growth are what will form the irreplaceable mother-cell → people + time + the possibility of expansion → the idea of form and structure will not exist: the past of 'structural necessity' grows to the now of 'existence or not': something lies in wait for the possibility to manifest itself, and awaits → ultrawaits."[81]

In New York, Oiticica continued to seek a form for what he had envisioned through the idea of *Barracão*, a communal context that is also a communal practice of gathering across social and individual differences, in the very spaces in which he himself lived and worked. He reused the materials he had used to build the Nests at MoMA to build and rebuild *Babylonests*, in his Second Avenue loft ("Loft 4"), and then *Hendrixsts*, in his tiny apartment on Christopher Street. This constant seeking was to be a pleasure in search of pleasure conducted in and for what he describes, in a letter to Lygia Clark, as a place "so complicated-complex that it could be a world."[82] Describing in the letter the first iteration of *Babylonests*, Oiticica notes the changes that result from the social encounters that unfolded in it, from the demands or desires of his guests, and points ahead to possible changes in its structure, plans yet to be carried out. He imagines the making and remaking of this "world" as an inherent feature of the undertaking.[83] "It is best," he says parenthetically, "if the thing is interminable":

> The loft here is turning out great: I constructed six *Nests* to live in; also a thing that has two levels . . . where you enter into the bottom through the top; Mário [Pedrosa] went crazy, because when he wanted to talk on the telephone he had to climb up that platform; below it, is like an underground or basement, and it has a place you have to crawl to get into; it is all in the beginning stages, but I want to create a place so complicated-complex that it could be a world, without furniture and boring apartment stuff, etc.; Mário died laughing, so I said: as a concession, because you are

here, we still have four chairs, which is a scandal; the ceiling has beams where I am going to fit a ceiling of rope to crawl across, etc.; you will see when I prepare all this (it is best if the thing is interminable), I may resolve to move.[84]

Reassessing these *Babylônests* two years later, Oiticica describes the ongoing reconstruction of the Nests, accomplished more fully by his friend Chris (jokingly referred to by some of his friends as "the wife of Oiticica"),[85] who inhabited and adapted one of the units, than himself:

> It's the proposition of play—luxury—pleasure . . . as the practice of experimentation, not formulae [arrow] after 2 years of my impatience with any "project of adaptation" it seems today it's arrived at a situation which more closely approximates what I desired so ardently (and, as always, skeptically): the real mobility of spaces by simple means: screens, planar curtains, furnishings, etc., have come to approximate what I thought, and they shouldn't be realized in an overly researched or complex way but rather, improvised, by hand and body: Chris in her nest got closer to what I'd thought than I did in all the rest: . . . to listen to records, to talk, as always talk and talk, to laze and to dream to plan the lazy shelter for the practice of laziness—leisure—whatever!

This is a reconstruction that entails an ongoing reconsideration of the internal and external orientation of these shelters, for Oiticica notes, "Even the inside-outside relation, with the street: always the same, now, today, I've changed it: I put a yellow blanket a white sheet on the window: filters that break the light and positivity of day which starts sun and lousy hot: furnishings: not to have to accept the permanence of the window that opens onto the street."[86] Just as *Correspondence*/Correspondence had a double orientation, outward through its organ and inward within the organization that produced and was to be, in turn, produced or reproduced by it as new members were drawn in, so did the *Babylônests* (as did the later, much-smaller *Hendrixsts*, in which Oiticica spent most of his time at the window that opened onto the street, interacting with passersby). They were private/public spaces, open (though not completely open)[87] to visitors who participated in their ongoing transformation, constituting both domestic space (where Oiticica resided, alongside, if not exactly with, his joke "wife") and a kind of crossroads in and through which new forms of contact could coalesce.

And, as was the case with Correspondence/*Correspondence*, whose focus was on self-organization on the assembly lines and in the plant community of Detroit and, at the same time, its international counterparts, the Nests were at once highly localized and at the same time fundamentally transnational. Indeed, many of those who lingered in the Nests were fellow exiles from Brazil and elsewhere, and as much as the Nests were shelters, they were also elaborate communication systems, connecting Oiticica, by way of numerous devices, to the world beyond the Nests. The Brazilian poet Waly Salomão, a frequent visitor, emphasizes the way that Oiticica used the informational paraphernalia of the Nests to constitute something like a world while, at the same time, inviting in and opening them to the wider world:

> The BABYLONEST (Nest of Babylon) of Second Avenue constituted a compact cosmopolitan city, Kindergarten, playground, laboratory, motel, mouth, university campus contained in an environmental capsule. The NEST was supplied with a TV set and remote control zapping nonstop, newspapers, radios, tape recorder, cassette tapes, books, magazines, telephone (the phone not subordinated as mere pragmatic medium but a compulsive conversation-roulette wheel with his vivid interjections seeming like hot jazz improvisations, *talking blues* and rap), camera, slide projector, viewfinder, boxes of sorted slides, a box of tissues, disposable pitchers and glasses, tubes, a piece of cut and polished agate, etc., etc. . . . NESTS and his archipelagic structures: not all one unit nor linear nor insular: like a tele-vision that transcoded the most private retreat of private life in windows open to others and to the world: MUNDO-ABRIGO [World-Shelter].[88]

But this opening of "the most private retreat of the private life" was articulated not just by mass-communication devices that would penetrate it and carry it to the outside world; it was articulated by its penetration by visitors and by the interactions that took shape between them, those that extended long-term friendships, those that initiated new ones, and those that emerged out of and dissolved back into random encounters with strangers on the street. Entering into and inhabiting these crawl-in/lie-down structures required, as was the case with the *Parangolé*, a certain degree of improvisation on the part of those who ventured in and who contributed to their ongoing reconfiguration. The lushly layered materials used to sheath and fill these Nests, at the center of which was Oiticica's bed, made entering into

and inhabiting an intensely sensuous, even erotic experience. From their first iteration at the *Eden* installation in London, the Nests created a context for the individual exploration of this experience: "Everyone should be self-enchanted, as if in a hermaphrodite activity—ha! That's maybe the reason I made some cabin-bed, a bed, a tent, for people to lie down, or nests. . . . Hermaphroditize your acts and you will be self-enchanted, and sexier and have appetite for everything."[89] But the experience was heightened and extended in the social encounters that the *Babylônests* and *Hendrixsts* accommodated and facilitated. Such encounters are, if not fully rendered, at least suggested in photographs, mostly black-and-white photographs, taken in these Nests. In these, we see figures outlined against the rich and layered textures that fill and structure this space.

One photograph taken of *Babylônests* in 1971 shows a space defined by various soft materials. The back "wall" appears to be made out of panels of some sort of sheer fabric, between which are openings through which bodies can pass. The panels hang down. It is not clear how many layers there are in the background or foreground. A figure near the background appears to be draped in this same fabric, either the excess of a piece too long for the space or another piece that is untethered to the nest. Another figure, which appears to be a woman, sits nearby. To the left of them are other planes or walls of hanging fabric, perpendicular to other pieces of fabric that they are positioned against, parallel to one another, together forming something like a labyrinth. On the right, in the middle ground, a leg and two arms (we cannot see whose) extend into the picture and disappear under a large sheet of bubble wrap that itself stretches toward (and presumably beyond) the foreground edge of the picture. Behind them, we can see a layer of straw on the bottom of at least this level of the structure. On the opposite side, somewhere between the two figures and the leg and arms, Oiticica stands in an opening between two sheets of what appears to be bubble wrap that hang down, forming another wall and door to the labyrinth-like structure, presiding over the scene.

Another photograph, also taken in 1971, shows what appears to be one unit, a box-like structure that is open to the side farthest from the camera, the back, behind which appears the vague outline of a light source; the structure is draped on top with dark, sheer fabric. In front, there is a semitransparent plastic that maintains its shape and structure when it is moved, folded back by a young man in the foreground to create an opening to a mattress

inside covered with a striped sheet, on which a female figure lounges, lying on her stomach, propped up on her elbows. Something of the background of the loft is visible but does not appear to be linked to the Nest. The young man in the foreground is shrouded in shadows, which suggests that the flow and play of light (from the window, the TV, or whatever other sources) is part of the design or at least the effect of these Nests. The young man gazes ahead seductively as he holds the curtain open, as if to beckon the photographer or future viewer inside.

What these photographs suggest is that these Nests were not just private dwellings in communication with the world. They were, as their earlier manifestations had approached in the public space of the exhibition, gathering spaces in which various collectivities could meet or form, interact, and "grow."

The bed into which the young man beckons us is not just a private retreat but a site for intensely social pleasures. Oiticica imagines the projection of these pleasures in a script for a three-minute film, *BABYLÔNESTS SUPER 8*, which he wrote in 1971. In the movement between the brief and often discontinuous shots that constitute this proposed cinematic iteration of *Babylônests*, Oiticica renders the constant mutation of the Nests through the addition of different elements, such as sheets, pillows, coats, mats, screens, and even a swing, as well as a constant shifting of the activities performed by anonymous men, including writing, book reading, watching television, but also dressing, cross-dressing (one man, alone in a bathroom, applies lipstick and a turban in a scene of autoerotic pleasure) and undressing, and from the very beginning of the script, kissing and otherwise entangled under a blanket. The script proposes to draw the viewer into the scenes of the Nests in an almost tactile way. If it begins with a shot of the bed "shot from the distant end" and then another, "from close view," the final shot seems to disallow any spectatorial distance by exceeding visual representation, offering instead, perhaps even through a projection on one of the very screens listed among the elements of the Nests in the script, "nests activity in the dark: not defined just felt, in strange, indirect lighting: 30 secs."

In this script, the scenes in the Nests are also intercut with other spaces found outside, in the city, a dance club, for example, the YMCA (a well-established site for queer encounters), the subway (which is described here as "heterogeneous scene" but was also a space in which Oiticica invited people to try out the *Parangolé*). This intercutting, which stages the kind

of "finding" Oiticica had hoped would extend from the experience of the *Parangolé* when he first created them, suggests a structural parallel, but also a contiguity between the kinds of gathering made possible in these spaces, and the supra-sensorial and markedly queer scenes that take shape in the contexts of the Nests. If the *Parangolé* enabled spectators to go on to find *Parangolé*-like structures in the wider world, the montage proposed here invites a recognition of the links between these spaces, of both the kinds of sociality the Nests seek to invite in and the Nest-like possibilities—possibilities for collective unconditioned and unconditioning behavior—within these other sites.

Oiticica offers another complex representation of the *Babylônests* in the series of slides he produced for the project he called *Neyrótika*, eighty untitled photographic images of what he called the "golden kids of the *Babylônests*" taken in the Nests. They were to be projected with a timer and soundtrack, whose elements were gathered randomly from one of Oiticica's many active communication devices, the radio. *Neyrótika*, he declares in the statement he prepared for its unrealized presentation at an exhibition in São Paulo in 1973, "is as it is pleasurable." What is pleasurable is framed in explicitly erotic terms, as the title's insertion of the erotic into New York's consequently reconfigured name suggests. Each of the images he produced offers, without narration or explanation, a portrait of one of the golden kids, presumably Oiticica's sexual partners, whom he often met in the active gay cruising sites of New York. Each of the young men is, minimally (if at all) clothed, each situated somewhere within or just outside the Nests, mostly lying down, engaging in the crawl-in/lie-down action that was from the start invited by this form but inviting it in turn. Each appears alone but engages the camera through intensely seductive gestures. One photograph, shot at an angle, shows a young man lying atop the bunk. Each figure, either saturated with intense color (one young man who appears in several shots is wearing bright-red lipstick against the backdrop of the bright red of the pillow that enfolds his head) or bathed in an almost palpable light (which, for example, renders almost translucent the skin of a young African American man stretched out across the bunk), seems almost to merge with the bedding or the sheer fabric of the walls of the Nest, as if their bodies were part of the sensual furniture out of which the Nest was composed. Here the social becomes part of, and activates, the space; the space, in turn, is socialized by the bodies' actively alluring presence. Here the body in pleasure is the element that arouses the

body in pleasure. At the same time, the body's inseparability from the space it makes, in its furnishing of that space, renders it something more, or other than, itself. It is as if the communal space, made up, in part, of bodies, is not just the unconditioning but the unmaking of those bodies. That which is as it is pleasurable here is, moreover, further articulated by the "improvised accidental interferences" of the radio, which adds another layer to the sensuality of this scene through rock music and opens it, at times harshly and abruptly, with news of the weather and of the U.S. bombing of Cambodia, to the outside which too forms part of the supra-sensorial structure of the Nests and the kinds of contact it sets off. The relation established between inside and outside, in the relay between the erotic pleasures of the photographs, the unrooted sounds of rock, the local weather and U.S. imperial violence in Southeast Asia, rearticulates the Babylônests as a complex context and, at the same time, suggests the need for another understanding of contiguity and perhaps another kind of "finding."

There is not a lot of other visual documentation of the goings-on in the nest. The pages of Oiticica's archives, however, record, in passing, the traversal of the Nests by various diverse personages: artists, including other Brazilians also living in exile and artists he befriended in New York, but also friends of friends, colleagues from his night job, sexual partners, fellow cocaine users, and other people Oiticica met in his explorations of the city and its margins. These notes are outgrowths of that traversal, that contact, and the collaborations that emerge from them. Oiticica envisions that contact, at one point in these notes as a "mutual experimental incorporation." If Correspondence's reciprocal penetration seemed at one point to depend on a stable perspective, mutual experimental incorporation in the Nests, enacted through a "play of simultaneous permeating experiences" among bodies "reeling and writhing never in one place long enough to form a "point of view" dispensed with any such notion. The complex spatiality and disarranging sensuality of the Nests allowed for no clear vantage point, no moment of composure.[90] Insofar as Oiticica turned to the Nests as he sought to move through and even beyond the object toward experiments in behavior, his notebooks became the primary form of creative production in the Nest. They mark and are marked by their production within the Nests and by the imprint of those others who passed through or lingered in that space, interacting with Oiticica in conversation and often pointed collaboration. They became the basis for proposals for new kinds of experimental activities

that had been incubating in the Nests, which Oiticica sometimes referred to as "flight plans." If the loft bed at the center of the Nests gathers and focuses all the erotic activity and energy that is otherwise dispersed throughout the Nest cells, it also suggests such future trajectories. Several writers who visited the Nests commented on this. Silviano Santiago's description of the bed as a "nautical bunk" recalls the vessel-like space of the *barrações* on which Oiticica originally modeled the idea of *Barracão*. Décio Pignatari remembers the bed as a kind of perch atop the labyrinthine web of Nests that were mounted around it, where Oiticica sat "dreaming of a long flight."[91]

Both the organ/ization and the Nests were set up to create the conditions for new forms of contact to take shape and, from that contact, new forms for social life. This is to say, they attempted to formulate a provisional structure for contact in order to discover what new modes of sociality might emerge. The organ/ization and the Nests, then, were not fixed institutions or spaces. The structure was not a container; it was an improvised apparatus, an extension of an ongoing experimental practice, much like the modes of assembly and the internally and externally open environmental agglomerations that emerged within and articulated the interpenetrating spaces and social life of the barrack yards and the favelas had been. What is important is not simply that people participated "within" it but what they did to form and transform it and what happened when they did. James and Oiticica hoped that what happened would exceed anything either of them could individually imagine. They both meant, ultimately, to cede authorship to others, inviting the kind of counterclaim they had experienced through *Minty Alley* and the *Parangolé*. But they were always also ambivalent about this. When others did not take up the forms of authorship that James and Oiticica were offering them in the ways they had imagined, complications arose, and James and Oiticica reclaimed their authorial positions.

James, who was effectively expelled from the United States almost as soon as Correspondence began to publish *Correspondence* for a noninternal audience (one that exceeded the Tendency), still attempted to participate by way of airmail correspondence and, cut off from the daily practices by which the organ was produced, became an embittered critic and meddlesome micromanager. He sent long diatribes critiquing various issues of the paper and putting forward detailed proposals for setting the organ/ization on the course he had imagined for it. His harsh, admonishing tone is evident in

letters such as this one: "That I, an intellectual should have to submit plans and proposals for this difficult business is unfortunate. But the militants had it in their hands to do what they liked. They did not do it badly. They did not do it at all. Over a year ago I told Nelson [Johnny Zupan]: you have to do that. I discussed it at length with Kaufman [Grace Lee]. I wrote J.B. [James Boggs] about it. It is not a question to play with."[92] He wanted others to "lead," but they did not lead, at least not in ways that were recognizable to him.

Oiticica extended the idea of the Nests at *rhodislandia*, an installation of Nests at the University of Rhode Island in Kingston in 1971. *Rhodislandia* combined a series of individual cubicles or cells, divided by nine-foot nylon screens, with an open area "destined [for] proposed performances."[93] Oiticica used various materials, including gravel on the floor and yellow and orange lights, to articulate the space and to invite or stimulate sensual experiences. He also invited participants to bring their own materials so that they could build their own Nests in the spaces established by the cubicles. Having extended this invitation, however, Oiticica was dismayed when a student proposed to throw paint on the walls of one of the cells. He objected, as one reporter recalled, to the "conventional therapeutic character of the idea"[94] and discouraged the student from pursuing it, insisting that the gesture did not adequately respond to the "new givens" of the cells but was a well-established cliché of participation and did not explore the potential present.

Although neither James nor Oiticica wished to predetermine the outcome of the experiments they initiated in the organ/ization and Nests, it would appear that not every form of formative or transformative behavior was welcome.What is at issue—and what was, for James and Oiticica, fundamental to the experimental practices they pursued in the organ/ization and the Nests—is something that was also central to the problematic of the motley crew: the idea of work and what work in common should or could be. The experimental procedures through which contact was structured within and by way of these apparatuses emerged from James's and Oiticica's attempts to rethink the idea of work and to rethink creative work as a form of labor continuous with other forms of labor.

James remained concerned with the form, structure, and sociality of sweaty labor, the labor of the slave that the Greeks both depended on and forgot, the labor of the rank-and-file worker. This is the kind of work that he often invoked when describing his own efforts. In a letter to Grace Lee, for example, dated "About July 2," in the midst of James, Lee, and Dunayevskaya's

joint interpretation of Hegel's *The Science of Logic* in 1949, he urges that they press ahead in their labors, for they have not yet completed their task: "We have to sweat. And aren't we?"[95] It is a reformulation of writing as a vigorous physical activity (a "manual labor" whose difficulty was highlighted by the references made in many of James's letters to the strain it put on his hands)[96] that corresponds to the activity of the Detroit plant workers with whom James and his cohort, wished to be in contact.

The question of labor had been central to the Johnson-Forest Tendency's critique of capitalism (including state capitalism). Having discovered a copy of Marx's 1844 manuscripts in Russian buried in the New York Public Library, members of the Tendency collaborated—relying in particular on Dunayevskaya's knowledge of Russian and Lee's knowledge of German—to produce the first English-language translations of several portions of the manuscripts. The document they produced became a central text for their particular uses of Marxism. The introduction to the translated excerpts highlighted their collective interest in the alienation of labor and the inhibition of the creative self-activity of workers, understood here as "individuals" whose development is stifled under capitalism as well as state capitalism. If, as they insist, "the worker was dominated by the objective results of his labor," then "a new society demands . . . the full development of the laborer's natural and acquired powers. The laborer must become a fully developed individual . . . "[97] The alternative they foresaw would be the "workers' control of production" for which Lenin had once called. When the Tendency invoked and interpreted Lenin's declaration, however, the emphasis was not on the individual worker but on a collective social or socialist insurgency made possible by new forms of self-organization:

> "The most important thing is to inspire the oppressed and the toilers with confidence in their own strength, to show them in practice that they can and must themselves undertake a correct, strictly orderly and organized distribution of bread, food, milk, clothing, dwellings and so forth, in the interests of the poor. . . . [A]n honest, courageous and universal move to hand over the administration to the proletarians and semi-proletarians will arouse such unprecedented revolutionary enthusiasm among the masses, will so multiply the forces of the people in combating their miseries, that much that seemed impossible to our old, narrow, bureaucratic forces will become practicable for the forces of the millions and millions

of the masses when they begin to work for themselves, and not under the whip, for the capitalist, the master, the official."

This was not to come afterwards. This was the revolution itself. Lenin continued without a pause.

"Only then shall we be able to see what untapped forces of resistance are latent in the people; only then will what Engels call 'latent socialism' be made apparent. . . ."

The only slogan he could find to express it was "Workers Control of Production" but what he meant by that was an uncoiling of creative forces embedded in the senses of modern man and implanted there by the productive forces and the productive process.[98]

Like Lenin, the founders of Correspondence were interested in what might become "practicable" for "the forces of the millions and millions of the masses when they begin to work for themselves." What might the further uncoiling of "creative forces" now embedded in our very senses make possible? Not just a more correct administration of industrial labor and the distribution of its products but a complete and democratic reorganization of social life at every level, beginning with "production" but, in the more expansive sense implied by "workers' culture" and the modes of association or contact that constitute it, in activities that explode the very categories of work and worker and in the generativity of the correspondences between them that the simultaneously invaginating and disseminating gestures of the organ made possible.

Oiticica, on the other hand, eschewed sweaty work. As he says at one point in his notes for the *BLOCK EXPERIMENTS IN COSMOCOCA*, a project that developed in the Nests in the midst of a long cocaine-infused session with the Brazilian filmmaker Neville D'Almeida, "We laugh in the face of the argument that posits that it is the artist's duty to elaborate his inborn talents and to sweat out his very lifeblood 'onto the canvas' (. . . the audience explodes with lahahahaughter): NEVILLE-I are not in favor of sweating: not even when constructing PENETRABLES and NUCLEIS did I sweat: but it really flowssss in JOY-DANCE."[99] If there is to be any sweating, it should "flow" from the intensity of a pleasurable activity such as dance or play. This is the kind of creative activity Oiticica valorized, not "work" but a practice he called *Crelazer*, or "Creleisure," a creative leisure (realized in and through

pleasure, which was for Oiticica a more radical form of productivity). The term itself, one of Oiticica's many neologisms, invokes and combines the word *lazer*, "leisure," with the words *crer*, "to believe," and *criar*, "to create" but also "to nurture" and "to breed."

This productive leisure, was, in Oiticica's vision, different not only from alienated labor but also from the alienated leisure that sustains it. "Leisure as pleasure" would be "opposed to the actuality of leisure as programmed desublimation that sustains hours-periods of alienated production-work."[100] This distinguished it from, for example, the production models in effect in the studio lofts of other queer artists that had inspired Oiticica at the time, such as those of Andy Warhol and Jack Smith, who valorized and explored, respectively, the possibilities of industrial production and its parody, recycling, in their own living/working/performance spaces: the open, unstructured space of Warhol's "factory," which lent itself to multifunctionality, to utility for the various kinds of industrial production in which Warhol was engaged, and the junk heaps in the middle of Smith's lofts which created a persistent disruption of function.[101]

Oiticica's "discovery" of Creleisure is, he insists, "essential to the conclusion of the participation-proposition" that first found full expression in the *Parangolé* and "the catalysis of non-oppressive energies and the proposition of the leisure connected to them."[102] Creleisure does not take shape as any one finished form but as a "permanent proposition." Through this practice and its instantiation in the "SUPER-LAZY laziness" that is foundational to the Nests, Oiticica says, "the idea of building the *Barracão* emerges once again as an urgent possibility, as the consolidation or towering thought, the dorsal spine of what I call Creleisure."[103] It is at the crux of the construction of a new world. In the "concentration of leisure" and the "non-repressive leisure" that is creleisure, "an idea of world aspires to its beginning: the world which creates itself through our leisure, in and around it, not as an escape but as the apex of human desires."[104] The Nests, from their first manifestation in the *Eden* installation, suggested this potential, precisely in their "non-environmentation"; they suggest "the possibility of creating everything from the empty cells, where one would try to 'snuggle-in' to the dream of the construction of totalities which rise like bubbles of possibilities—the dream of a new life, which can alternate between . . . 'self-founding' . . . and the 'supra-forming.'"[105]

Although the uncoiling of creative forces and self-founding and supra-forming would appear to reinstate an originary, untainted, authorial subject, this is somewhat undone by the disruptive effects of the contact this uncoiling would, in these contexts, entail. It is contact in and through the organ/ization and the Nests and the interplay of creative forces or energies that contact enables that becomes the productive occasion. As I later explore more fully, the occasion is *reproductive* as well, conceived through the organ in communication, or intercourse with the world, and growing and gestating in the incubating, womb-like Nests.

Neither James nor Oiticica ever abandoned their highly self-conscious concern, which was as aesthetic as it was social and political, with matters of form. Finding the form, the structure/practice (for the two finally cannot be thought apart from each other) that would foster contact and create a provisional frame for the production of new modes of sociality and new modes of creative expression was what their experiments attempted. This is, at least in part, why Correspondence/*Correspondence* and the Nests were always being made and remade. For James and Oiticica, the endpoints of the experimental practice of forging new forms would be the construction of a new society and the erection of a world. These were ongoing projects that they hoped would ultimately exceed their own efforts. But they found it hard to make contact and hard to make contact work (or be leisurely or lazy). James's and Oiticica's efforts were often considered, by critics assessing the quantity and quality of their output, both at the time and sometimes retrospectively, to be "failures."

Although James wrote and published prolifically within the Johnson-Forest Tendency, he and the other members of the Tendency never found the form that would realize their vision for an alternative organ/ization. With fewer and fewer member-subscribers, the paper they produced went largely unread, and the little organization that emerged out of a dissident Tendency of only sixty or seventy splintered, leaving only a handful of people at its core and, in the end, James alone. Many members later disavowed the project, and even leftist historians have dismissed it, suggesting, as Paul Buhle does, that they could not create a new society because "they could not tie their critique to a new form of social activity."[106] In his view, it is better to understand Correspondence as merely documentary, "to see *Correspondence* . . . as essentially a gaze into the hidden worlds of Detroit's boom years,"[107] its value more historical than anything else.

Oiticica, who exhibited sporadically, often by proxy, and was unable to obtain funding to mount the large-scale projects he envisioned, was also often seen as failing (to be productive) by his contemporaries. He notes, parenthetically, the prevalence of this criticism in the midst of an article he wrote in December 1978, after returning to Rio:

> And for the information of all the idiots that "want to know what I did in NEW YORK beyond the big successes already known" and of other imbeciles that say that "during these years I stopped producing works" because by works they mean these stupid things that are exhibited several times a year in galleries and museums: in NEW YORK I arrived at and consolidated the habit and reality that works and production are more than the multiplication of works or the inflation of human minds with superficial/boring ideas!: and isn't that what is made by the majority of what are called "plastic artists"?[108]

It was only years later that many of the projects Oiticica planned were exhibited in galleries and museums in ways that allowed them to be recognizable as works in this sense. And they are often exhibited, in these contexts, as closed, static, historical objects, rather than as spaces or openings through which the erection of a world might proceed.

Assessments of James's and Oiticica's failure to produce the forms they envisioned ignore precisely the way they were trying to enact a new "social activity" that extended from existing social activity, another kind of work that was something other than "the multiplication of works"; such work against the work would have taken shape in collective practices beyond the context of the factory or the vanguard party, the avant-garde studio or the exhibition, in a reformulation of them so radical as to enact their disappearance. Just as the aesthetic sociality of blackness was not reducible to any fixed image, the expansive expression of it that both James and Oiticica actively sought could never be reducible to any discrete or complete work. Again, in cricket, what matters is not who finally wins the long-drawn-out test match but the ongoing repetition of those beautiful gestures that become familiar enough to be renewed "at will" by anyone who witnesses them and that achieve their significance precisely in this renewal. And, again, "the rehearsal for the samba already is samba," already a collective experience of immanence and plenitude rather than mere preparation for some already-determined end. Whether in James's attempted transcendence of the party,

which would have been grounded in the material lives of workers and in an expansive sense of that term that challenges conventional conceptions of work and of the work, or in Oiticica's seemingly infinite extension of the party reconceived as the interplay of environment and body, the desire for a radical disruption of political determination, modeled on and inspired by the aesthetic sociality of blackness, was the impetus and aim of their experiments in exile.

Exploring the relation between aesthetic practices and politics in the book *Party/Politics*, Michael Hanchard calls "the terrain of politics" coalitions, alliances, ideologies, beliefs, and mobilizations.[109] According to Hanchard, "implementing and practicing political community" can be the starting point for a new society, a crucial practice:

> The urge among political actors to create a new society is generated by frustration with an existing social order and the activation of political and social imagination, the desire to experience in daily life what one dreams. Yet the forging of a new society requires more than just imagination. It is not enough for an organization to harbor beliefs and dreams of an alternative world. The imaginative process in politics involves an impulse to nurture an alternative world in private, to seal off a particular formation as a bulwark against the incursions of other, more dominant norms and values. This impulse I shall refer to as the laboratory of political culture.[110]

While James and Oiticica sought a new society and an alternative world, they did not seek to nurture it by sealing it off; they sought to grow it by opening it, by inviting people into their experiments, which were ultimately merely extensions of the experimentation they found in effect in the margins of the existing world. They wanted through a reciprocal "penetration" or a "mutual experimental incorporation" to commingle with others, to invade and be invaded by the invasion that is always already in effect, to create something else, something—though they were always somewhat ambivalent about this—that they could not fully anticipate and that—in spite of their own impulses—they did not wish to control.

James and Oiticica both sought mechanisms through which subjects (organizers, artists, theoreticians) who either are white or who can claim a kind of honorary status as subjects as a function of their proximity to whiteness or its normativity can actually join black aesthetic sociality's subjectless formation, recognizing that what they had come to hope for and dream of

is harbored within the reservoir of that field. The problem was not just how they could join this subjectless formation but how they could keep themselves from turning it into a historical subject, and it was not just how to stave off political subjection but how to sustain insurgent form-making in the resistance to subjection. The ideal of contact as a kind of reciprocal penetration or mutual experimental incorporation producing ceaseless transformation and new social activity can only fully materialize in contact's reproduction in and as the open book.

3

UNDOCUMENTS

Reproduction at the Margins

The experimental work undertaken in the organ/ization and the Nests takes shape in and through writing. It materializes in and as a profusion of documents, proposals for works, but the proliferation of these documents often seems to undo the work undertaken and works proposed. This dual operation, in which experiments in a common, motley sociality are undermined by a conventional vanguardist conception of the work and in which that very conception of the work is itself undone by an anarchic sociality that undermines the vanguard, must be further investigated in order to better understand the new concepts of work it allows.

The primary focus of Correspondence was the production of a certain kind of journalistic work—articles and editorials that record or reveal the radical reconstruction of society that the members of Correspondence believed was already under way. Such works were to be disseminated as widely as possible through *Correspondence*. But the production process itself gave rise to numerous paraworks: other internal documents that shadow, supplement, and disrupt, which is to say, other forms of correspondence that necessitate the production of *Correspondence*'s other, its internal newsletter, *Clearing House*. These paraworks consisted of, among other things, memoranda, letters, and other items through which articles were initially planned and continually revisited and extended; transcriptions of dictated stories, often with editorial insertions and deletions; missives—both open and private—critically assessing articles and announcing new agendas for future issues; proposals for wooing reluctant member-writers and subscribers; reports (such as Cartwright's) on the

integration of new members whose ideas about organization and writing did not always meet or conform to the expectations of the older, founding members; and resolutions that call for the articulation and rearticulation of the larger theoretical framework through which *Correspondence*'s correspondences were to be understood. These paraworks could be formal and official, intensely intimate, or both at the same time. They might contain short and curt instructions, almost in code, or long, detailed, multisectioned or composite declarations addressed to multiple members, written in installments over the course of several days. They were typed onto all possible forms of paper, mimeographed, dashed out onto notepads and airmail envelopes, and, quite frequently, inscribed in the margins of other items. This was an extension of a prolific process that had already begun among James, Dunayevskaya, and Lee in the Johnson-Forest Tendency, as Lee later recounted: "Our energy was fantastic. We would spend a morning or afternoon writing, talking, and eating and then go home and write voluminous letters to one another extending or enlarging on what we had discussed, sending these around to other members of our tendency in barely legible carbon copies."[1]

If Correspondence enacted its own unalienated version of the "speed up," the cocaine-heightened leisure/pleasure of the *Babylônests* and *Hendrixsts* created another kind of speediness and endurance that could keep Oiticica awake and working for days at a time. It, too, gave rise less to works than to an abundance of works in progress, works, in Oiticica's terms, to be "completed or outlined on paper,"[2] which were rendered incomplete by Oiticica's own constant and disruptive revision and augmentation of them. They included, among other things, what Oiticica called "flight plans" for "programs in progress," proposals for the construction of new types of environments or "situations to be lived" beyond the incubating space of the Nests and for the various kinds of activities they might invite or incite. These were elaborated and reelaborated, in the form of *vislumbres* ("glimpses" of ideas recorded on index cards) or specific, detailed plans, diagrams, and instructions laid out in handwritten notes, pages and pages of notes spread across notebook after notebook, notes that might be hastily scrawled or precisely laid out, in pencil or various colors of ink (sometimes combined), embellished with drawings, interlaced with photographs or clippings from articles or books, marked up by editorial insertions and deletions or carefully transcribed. They might be further elaborated

through handwritten updates, typewritten transcriptions, translations from Portuguese to English or English to Portuguese (sometimes even French), and carbon copies through which Oiticica generated ever-new "definitive" versions. They were composed and recomposed by Oiticica in the Nests in the context of ongoing exchanges with various interlocutors in the United States and Brazil and beyond.

Unlike James, Oiticica was not, in the United States, part of a coherent group of collaborators (though the fluidity of James's group and the splits that necessitated the group's reconfiguration and ultimately led to its dissolution both undermined that coherence). Oiticica extended himself in many different directions at once, making contact with and engaging in collaborations with people from very different milieus. This contact and collaboration could occur in person; in informal conversation in the phone calls Oiticica sometimes documented in his notebooks; in the "raps in progress" he recorded on tape and later transcribed; via airmail, in the form of private letters or the general reports sent out for publication in various vanguard or avant-garde journals in Brazil;[3] or the "questionnaire in progress" he sent to friends or people he hoped to befriend.

The documents in and across which these proposals materialized are marked, in their very proliferation, by a certain irresoluteness, an unfinishedness that would seem to prevent them from realizing what they proposed or from reaching the audiences that would realize them. James and Oiticica each attempted to arrest or contain that proliferation within a larger, more comprehensive document that would distill or arrange this seemingly endless stream of documents. They both aspired to a book or book-like thing, something closed and complete and, as such, a work of art in the conventional sense, suitable for existing modes of circulation and reception. But they both resisted this even as they desired it, even as they proposed it. This contradictory aspiration was not a facile valorization of process over product but a fundamental feature of their overall efforts to socialize authorship and the intellectual function, to dealienate work from the work while acknowledging that the socialization of the intellectual function requires the materialization of the work in some form as a meeting point, a nexus for contact.

These documents proposed works that were realized in their dissolution and were dissolved in the way they were proposed. They were given over to audiences that became something other than audiences in their receipt

of them. They were open works that actively courted their own unworking through the kind of counterclaim that had reformulated and radicalized James's and Oiticica's earlier works. The socialization of the intellectual function would be this unworking of the work, but it still depended, while it could not rest, on the moment of the work.

Both James and Oiticica embarked on a search for an ideal form for the book that would not be a book, a work that would not remain a work in the conventional sense but that would work toward its own unworking. Neither James nor Oiticica, however, was ever able to arrive at this form. The irresoluteness that manifested itself in these plans or proposals was redoubled in the suspense within which the book or book-like thing was held, the provisional form of what remained. And what remained remained underground, a closely guarded secret, held in reserve, in numbered copies within the organ/ization and the Nests and the limited trajectories by which they extended themselves. This was due, in part, to the subversive and illegal natures of the working they materialized, an illegality that further jeopardized James's and Oiticica's already-precarious status. (Both, in fact, were interrogated by U.S. authorities and eventually expelled due to their suspected roles in criminalized activities: James was surveilled and harassed by the FBI for his involvement in revolutionary movements and support for autonomous radical activities, and Oiticica was surveilled and interrogated for his alleged involvement in a friend's cocaine transaction and, by extension, for his homosexual activities.)[4] It was also, in part, out of a fear that they might be misinterpreted or misused and out of a desire to control the way they were read.

But the documents whose proliferation these books attempted to arrest and contain, documents that sought to resolve themselves in works that would exceed arrest and containment, resist arrest and containment. These books, then, which ended up generating even more documents, became themselves such documents, or undocuments: proposals for their own unworking. While they never achieved the form that James and Oiticica tried to imagine for them, they remained true to an ideal of openness and manifested themselves in and as an experimental poetics of openness that is, at the same time, a politics without end, an open and unended working. This openness is, as the limited circulation of these undocuments and the secrecy surrounding them suggest, at once thrilling and terrifying.

What was published in 1993 as "*American Civilization* by C. L. R. James" is an effort to represent or give expression to the organic, instinctive, spontaneous revolutionary tendencies in the United States that the Johnson-Forest Tendency had been trying to make contact with and document. It seeks to mark those tendencies' historical origins, track their persistence and evolution, and forecast their convergence and culmination in the full creative self-expression and self-organization of first the "American" masses and then the masses worldwide. Utopian both in its critique of the present and in its anticipation of the future, it attempts a comprehensive rendering, "a total impression of society in movement." But, at the same time, James, its author, insists, it is not quite that, not quite that yet. Indeed, while revealing this movement, a movement he wished to be a part of, and giving us a glimpse of the future he saw in it, the author hesitates, apologizes, disavows the very picture of American civilization he has produced. Everything in this text, we are told, will be reworked; everything is provisional, a starting point for a whole other work, for what he imagined would be a wholly other kind of work.

From the beginning, and again and again, the author warns what was to be a specific and limited circle of readers that the work they are reading is not what they are supposed to be reading. Moreover, they are not the readers for whom the work is ultimately intended. As he explains in the preface, "The following is an attempt not to outline but to give a preliminary view of an essay I propose to write for the general public. Essay because it is a statement of position. It will be 75,000 words, no more. This Ms. is neither an outline nor an abridgement. It seeks only the best way to convey certain ideas." Moreover, "This document is absolutely confidential. This means that it should not be talked about to anyone, should not be seen by anyone. Any exception made to this will be looked upon as a breach of trust."[5] He repeats all this, elaborating, at the end of the "introductory" section of the book,

> Such then is the book I propose to write. I have, however, to give a warning. What is written here is not a rough draft of the book. It is not an outline. It is not an abridgement.
>
> New things will be added. Much of this will be drastically cut.
>
> The whole will be put together in one closely interconnected logical and historical exposition for the average reader, in 75,000 words, not a

word more, and written so that it can be read on a Sunday or on two evenings.

The final draft will therefore be quite different from this. I use in this manuscript long quotations, repetitions, digressions, historical and literary references, etc. because for the limited circle before whom I am placing these ideas and this project, it is the most convenient form.

The finished book is something else. For one thing I propose an immense research into the actual lives and opinions of the people so that the ideas which are expressed here in quotations by authorities will emerge in an entirely different form, will emerge as expressions of the lives and activities of the people concerned.[6]

James wanted to create a document not only about, not only for, but also and equally importantly with the American masses. The manuscript, however, an early materialization of the document he imagined he would produce, did not yet address or reach those masses. It was circulated only underground, among James's closest comrades, fellow revolutionary intellectuals who were asked to respond, "preferably," as the preface stipulates, "in writing."[7] This writing and the writing James would have produced in response were interrupted by James's arrest and detention on Ellis Island by the U.S. government for "passport violations" and his eventual departure, after his appeal for citizenship was denied. How are we to read what remains, this abortive preface to a proper documentation of the masses in movement, this underground document—or we might say "undocument"[8]—which is "not a draft, not an outline, not an abridgement," but a secret "seeking"? How do we enter into its collage-like form, which combines elements taken from philosophy and from *Life* magazine, into something like a new historical narrative? What are we to make of its strange poetics—all the asides, pledges, and tentative proposals, the warnings and provisos, the long quotations, the repetitions, digressions, historical and literary references, and so forth, which were to be excised later, as the work took "an entirely different form," that "best way to convey certain ideas" that had yet to be invented and that would not be, strictly speaking, for "us"? How are we to read the book that we are not supposed to read? How do we understand the necessity that compels us to read it? Is there something, after all, in this provisional deferral of proper representation or

documentation that approaches, however improperly, what James elsewhere calls "the future in the present"?[9]

In having yet to become the new kind of work James imagined, this undocument, initially composed in the winter of 1949–50 as "Notes on American Civilization,"[10] reads less like a document, more like a plan. It is an incomplete attempt to invent or invite a new form of authorship that would give full expression to a new mode of sociality emerging within and against the political life of the citizen, at the uncontained margins that simultaneously constitute and undermine the polis. James's making and remaking of this work—this work that is not yet a work—attempts to join this new mode of sociality, to participate in its general remaking of both work and the work of art.

It is, in this respect, inextricably linked to the efforts of the Johnson-Forest Tendency as it reinvents itself in and as the Correspondence Publishing Committee, or Correspondence. *American Civilization* emerges out of their collaborative experiments. And it continues to develop by way of them. Insofar as its preface includes an invitation to group members and other close associates to add their own notes, to actually inscribe those notes, in the form of marginalia, directly onto the numbered copies of the "Notes" that had been entrusted to them, the document began to expand almost immediately by way of the copies made and the insertions that began to accumulate within them. It expanded like the rhizomatic sociality that emerged in and around the plants in Detroit whose proper documentation or expression the "Notes" were meant to prefigure.

While it is unclear whether the notes on the first draft of the notes were actually comprehensively compiled, it is clear that group members continued to work on James's "work." They returned to the notes again and again as they tried to reorganize and refocus in the face of numerous crises, including external pressure from the U.S. government and James's expulsion and the difficulty of his long-distance, epistolary participation in group affairs but also internal disagreements resulting in the splintering of the group. Subsequently, copies of the notes continued to circulate, giving rise to numerous other documents within which the notes would be developed and recomposed.

James had already adopted "notes" as a literary form in an earlier work, or work-like thing, later published as *Notes on Dialectics*, which attempts

to ground the group's critique of the vanguard party and its dedication to finding other ways to support the spontaneous efforts of the proletariat in the dialectic itself. These earlier notes are essentially an epistolary text, constructed from correspondence between James and other members of the Johnson-Forest Tendency, on Hegel's *Science of Logic* and Lenin's notes on *Science of Logic* in the "Philosophical Notebooks." James first formulated them while in Nevada (the letters are sometimes referred to as "The Nevada Document"), where he lived from August to November 1948, temporarily separated from other members of the Tendency, while seeking a divorce from his first wife so he could marry his second wife. He mailed the notes (which are, in part, notes on notes) to the group in installments that were, as Aldon Lynn Nielsen describes, "a set of carbon copies of a typescript in progress."[11] They are marked by their informality and extemporaneity, which James himself points out, declaring, "I am writing *en famille* and as these ideas strike me, I put them down."[12] As Dunayevskaya later recalled, "it was . . . 'en famille'; it served as stimulus to 'ourselves' getting down to Hegel."[13] Far from a finished work, then, these were installments in the ongoing work of the Tendency.[14]

As such, *Notes on Dialectics* is part of a long line of unfinished, unpublished undocuments (including Marx's 1844 manuscripts, which the Tendency collectively translated into English and introduced to U.S. audiences) that Stathis Kouvelakis, writing about Lenin's notes on *The Science of Logic*, identifies as central to the European Marxist tradition. This is the tradition to which James and the Tendency had, at the time, committed themselves, though, as James later noted, his early studies of the aesthetic sociality of the barrack yards had already shaped his political ideas ("I did not learn everything from Marxism," he insisted. "When I went to Marxism I was already well prepared").[15] The strange form of such notes, Kouvelakis insists, "or rather their total absence of a pre-established form, their completely experimental dimension," is important. He explains, "It is not by chance that in each of these cases we find ourselves faced with texts that deny the very notion of a 'work'—fragmentary and incomplete in the extreme, the extremity of the situations of which they bear, or indeed are, the mark, and in which their vocation is to disappear in the effects that they contribute to producing."[16] In the case of Lenin's text, for example, its form, a montage of "constitutionally fragmented and heterogeneous" elements and "linguistic babble," its undeniably "material texture as an

object," is what realizes the materialism that Lenin sought in philosophy, a materialism reimagined through the reconfiguring of the image, guided by the notion that knowledge is not a fixed image or picture but "a moment (and just one moment)" of [revolutionary] practice."[17]

> There is no longer a "picture" in any real sense; it dissolves as it were under our eyes and is abolished in the material activity of its fabrication. Or rather, as the pictorial revolution of Manet had already announced in a practical way, it is the picture itself that becomes the means of knowledge and intervention for the appearances and significations of the world, and in this sense, a process of transformation, of testing, of this same world by the specific materiality of the techniques applied by the painter.[18]

The unfinished and unpublished texts of this tradition, which Lenin's notes on Hegel exemplify, do not seek to establish fixed or crystallized perspectives, Kouvelakis argues, but are meant, instead, to become "vanishing mediator[s]" that dissolve into the trajectories they initiate.[19]

Notes on Dialectics is similarly vanishing and initiatory, mediated and mediating. This began when Lee and Dunayevskaya provided James with translations and interpretations of Hegel's text and extracts from Lenin's notes on Hegel's text.[20] It continued in ongoing meetings and correspondence about the subject among James, Dunayevskaya, and Lee, in their efforts to work toward some sort of definitive form for the work. And it continued in the discussions that the secret, surreptitiously circulated notes inspired among other members of the Tendency. As Martin Glaberman later wrote in a review of the republished notes,

> I can still remember when I saw the first draft of the *Notes on Dialectics*. I was drilling holes in crankshafts at the Buick Division of General Motors in Flint, Michigan. . . .
>
> The impact was unbelievable. . . . On the days that a section of the document came in the mail we would sit up late into the night reading and discussing it. Each day we would wait for the mail to see if another section had come.[21]

These notes and all that they generated redefined the thinking of the Tendency, which eventually transformed itself into Correspondence, within which the "Notes on American Civilization" were then generated. The

appearance of this second set of notes, whose title pointedly recalls their precursor's, coincides with the Johnson-Forest Tendency's decision to break finally with old notions of the vanguard party and the party organ and find new forms, and its attempts to develop a model for a materialist practice of writing that seems to seek resolution in the form of a complete coherent work but, at the same time, also aspires to become something like a "vanishing mediator" for the creative activities of the new social forces that Correspondence/*Correspondence* sought to bring together. But before vanishing, it would first breed more and more and more writing.

This writing was primarily channeled into the organ, but as we have seen, finding the right form for the organ was no easy task. In 1956, after the group's first major split, "Notes on American Civilization" became one of the primary objects of the "rapid interchange of material" that James called for, as he demanded a response to the many proposals ("weekly and often daily directives," Grace Lee recalls, "on how to run the organization and the paper")[22] that he mailed back to the United States after he was effectively deported. It became the focus for the group's ongoing attempts to define and redefine what the purpose of the organization and its organ might be. In the context of the group's struggle to "crystallize" a perspective (or something like it), "Notes on American Civilization" emerges as something like an official statement or "statement in progress" for Correspondence/*Correspondence*.

Correspondence was, at least temporarily, revived through the intramural contact of organizers trying to understand their own failure to disappear. The "Notes on American Civilization" document became the means by which Correspondence drew readers into the discussion and the organ/ization it would shore up. The April 1956 issue of *Correspondence* is dedicated entirely to "Extracts from a Study of American Civilization," inviting readers into this ongoing "study" by soliciting their responses. As the introductory paragraph announces,

> These excerpts have been selected from a study on which the Editors of CORRESPONDENCE are now engaged as part of our theoretical preparation for a weekly paper.
>
> Our study begins by describing the anxiety and even fear with which Americans today view the society in which they live and which is in such marked contrast to the extra-ordinary force and vitality historically

> associated with the American people. It is our belief that this organic disorder in every sphere of American society, though necessary, is a passing phenomenon because great new industrial and social forces able to lift the nation to new heights are already in existence. The purpose of our study is to show what these new forces are and how to look for them.[23]

The final paragraph of this introduction seeks to invite readers into this ongoing "study," or study in progress, which is indispensable to the preparation for and of the paper and which materializes in and through discussions of the document: "We will be glad to hear from any readers who would like to participate in the discussion of the above and other sections of this study of American Civilization, and thus help in preparing the weekly Correspondence."[24]

A letter dated July 17, 1956, signed by "N" (presumably James), addressing "various proposals made by various people in recent letters," reiterates the importance that such discussions be organized around the production of a document. Anticipating a convention in which such discussions would involve (and, ideally, consolidate) the organization as a whole, the letter urges "a conscious planned effort to sharpen lines around positions & proposals & perspectives *down in writing*."[25] The letter calls for reports, "but . . . what reports?" The version of "Notes on American Civilization" referred to as "the AC Document" as it circulated and recirculated within the organization operated like a report of sorts. It became central to the discussions of the organization, grounding its efforts to "break out of the 'holes and corners,'" to shore up a political base and to define, or redefine, and launch, or *relaunch*, yet again, the paper:

> The suggestion was made, I believe, in relation to a perspective involving a relatively intense discussion of political positions flowing from the appearance of GD [probably the Ghana Document, or *Ghana: The Autobiography of Kwame Nrkumah*] and the AC [the American Civilization document], and also a relatively intense period of activity in the circulation of the last two to all manner of people—the accomplishment of a real stride forward in breaking out of the "holes and corners." These parallel and simultaneous advances to be followed by a convention around June 1. At the convention the political base would be defined and affirmed, the activity from the world outside evaluated and then on

the basis of these two accomplishments the more specific and concrete aspects of launching the paper would be discussed and planned.[26]

At this point, it was the circulation and circulatability of the AC document as written document that became critical. Its circulation, in some form, would be a concrete expression of the organization's perspective or politics, the clear and stable articulation of which seemed always to be lacking:

> Today, even more than some months ago, it is crucial that we smash thru from saying politically correct abstractions to doing the concrete things which express the politics. Today we know what we must do; we have the material at hand, typed and printed. Today a failure to act is not merely a failure to put the politics into circulation as it might have been, at least to some extent, some months ago. Today a failure to act negates and degenerates the political line and base. Any compromise on this will be very damaging to everybody.[27]

But there was, this document notes, also a danger in getting bogged down in the details in devoting all of the organization's efforts to sharpening lines through the finalization of a text:

> One might conclude: today we should put before the org the reports of C/t [Cartwright, aka Selma James] and J [James] as spurs to discussion and clarification of what to do and how to do it. However I think that the specific and detailed character of these reports will serve *at this time* mostly as another desperately seized opportunity to discuss particularities and details—as C/t correct here or there?—is J right when he says this or suggests that? The time for *that* discussion, entirely legitimate in the proper contexts, is not now. I don't care whether C/t or J are right or wrong or just plain crazy.[28]

While the AC document may have focused the efforts of the organization, sharpening its lines, the focus might have missed the larger picture. So here, in the midst of this call for more discussion, more writing, there is also the call for a renewal of contact and all of its unpredictable effects: "Today let everyone experiment on his own, make all kinds of mistakes but make contact with the world. *Then the detailed discussion can follow.*"[29]

As Correspondence continued to redefine and relaunch itself and its organ (even as those thousands of copies continued to pile up in its offices),

the AC document, as statement of purpose or statement in progress, continued to be central to the preparation for/of the paper. But it too was redefined and relaunched. In a letter published in the internal paper, *Clearing House*, October 1, 1956 (presumably to Lyman Paine), the new editor of the paper, Grace Lee, reports on a counterproposal (made in response to some unreferenced earlier proposal) that the leadership must look at, must "penetrate" the document itself, must "master" that document so that it can take responsibility for its presentation at the convention (apparently no simple task since Grace Lee herself admits, in a letter dated June 24, 1956, to being unable to do so). This presentation was to be followed, of course, by discussion, "discussion and then assignment of articles on the basis of discussion," in a seemingly interminable proliferation of documents. But in this letter, she marks a fundamental transformation of the document, one that occurs over the course of its circulation and discussion within the group as a whole:

> When the document was first proposed, it was proposed as "the Vanguard Party document." Following upon the report to the conference, what everyone expected was an elaboration on this report, dealing principally with the way the union is the chief instrument in the demoralization and defects of the working class. However, in the course of working on this document, it became transformed into a study of *American Civilization*. This did not mean only the inclusion of Women, Youth, Negroes, Intellectuals, Middle Class, etc. All this is true, but much more was involved, a qualitative political development. For the first time, in a document before the organization for adoption and to be taken to the world by the organization, we assumed responsibility for making a fundamental criticism of American civilization. In my opinion the significance of this cannot be overestimated.[30]

If, then, particularly at those moments of tumult in which the organization sought to begin itself and its organ anew, the "Notes" or the "AC document" served as an anchor, it also registered and gave expression to these changes. As such, as a statement that was both prefatory and always a statement in progress, it got reconfigured and circulated in the wider world not only in drafts but in a number of spin-off documents through which the work of the organization and the organ got carried out. In 1956, James worked with members of Correspondence to produce a new version

of the "Notes" (which is likely the version cited in many of the memos just quoted). A memo dated August 24, 1956, records some other instances. In a section titled "Deepening and Expanding Our Theory," it reports, "To master the American Civilization document and give a class on it, Nettie has made a graph of the main lines of development in the document which has brought added illumination to the profound conceptions in the document."[31] In a section titled "Establishing an Audience," it reports, "In Detroit Heinz [James Boggs] and one of the friends of the organization are working out plans to issue a leaflet in the plant which will embody the ideas about the union in the American Civilization document and the information pertinent to that plant. The proposal for the leaflet originated out of the necessities in the plant itself." It further notes, "In New York a reading party on pamphlet #2 was held with half members and half non-members. In response to the letters on the Greek Democracy pamphlet, copies of the first pamphlet and of extracts from the American Civilization document have been sent out."[32] A later memo, signed "Th" and dated July 3, 1957, reports on the possibility of its translation into French by the Socialism or Barbarism Group: "C/u's [Cornelius Castoriadus's] group will translate and publish at least in the review."[33]

At issue in the document's ongoing discussion and reformulation (and if I have quoted extensively from these discussions, it is in the interest of conveying some sense of the immensity of the archive of this ongoing communication) is not only a sharpening of lines but an ongoing search for a transmittable and "penetrating" form, or, as Thompson (perhaps the "Th" who reported on the AC document's translation) argues in the letter addressed "Dear 5," dated October 11, 1956, "My view is 1) that the first need is to master the document; and 2) to find a form for its publication."[34] Arguing against relegating the AC document to the status of a convention resolution ("on which there are fundamental positions, for, against or for modification, which are to be discussed before the convention and settled at it so that we can proceed on the majority line"),[35] he insists that such internal discussions would be "old politics." The "new" would be based on contact with the outside world. Such contact would be established, ideally, through the form of the book. As he argues, "It is when published in the form of a book with the weight of a book that this document will have the impact in wide circles that it deserves."[36]

This impact would be twofold. It could potentially enhance the intellectual credibility and respectability above ground not only of James, as author, but of the organization as a whole. As James suggests early on in a letter dated October 14, 1953 (that is unaddressed and signed only with an X), "I saw W/burg [Frederick Warburg, James's London publisher] this afternoon. . . . He urged me personally to get a book out as fast as I can, to announce myself so to speak. He then said and I agreed that the whole thing would stand or fall by Am. Civ. If that were a success it would not only sell here and abroad but it would also help to sell the others."[37] The impact would also be registered in the way it was taken up by workers themselves, the potential significance of which is suggested by some of the responses to the document that Lee recorded: "The discussion on the document [within the organization] has reached what almost appears to be an insoluble impasse. . . . With workers on the outside, it has been the complete opposite. Their responses have varied from: 1) 'this section should be sent all over the country'—Willis; 2) 'I like these paragraphs (page 3, para 3 and page 4, para 3), explain them to me more.'—H; 3) 'This is what I have been waiting for, will you and G come over and discuss with me and my wife?'—Reb."[38] Such responses point to the possibility of the kind of reciprocal "penetration" that the group had imagined. "The book that matters here," James at one point declares, "is A.C.—that is the one which will settle everything."[39]

But for James, the "AC document," composed of the "Notes on American Civilization" in circulation, even in late 1956, was still provisional—necessary but provisional. James was still seeking to find another form within which these ideas might take shape. He was seeking a form for what was still unregisterable, inexpressible in the world as it was structured above ground, a form through which the very activities by which the ground both above and below would be restructured, was already in the process of being restructured. He was seeking a form, in this case a specifically aesthetic form (but one that is always also social and political), through which the creative activity of those very workers could express itself, in which the kind of intellectual mediation so brilliantly provided in the past by the likes of Whitman, Melville, and the abolitionists, all of whom created new forms of expression for new social forces, would become unnecessary, irrelevant. This would be a totally new kind of work, an anticipation of that "art for the mass" that still had yet, "openly and directly," to come.

What can be said, then, of the provisional document that remains? We might, I would suggest, think of *American Civilization*, so full of anticipation for itself and for the society in movement it names and attempts to render, as something other than indicative, something quite other indeed in its complex temporality and "mood." This sense of a futurity in and for American civilization as it is, in and for the "Notes on American Civilization" as it is, manifests itself as a kind of subjunctivity.

We might think of this subjunctivity not just at the level of the grammar of this or that passage but in the terms that Samuel R. Delany and Joanna Russ, among others, have used to discuss speculative fiction. For Delany and Russ, subjunctivity is both literal and metaphorical. Delany discusses it, in an ongoing work of his own titled, at one point, "About 5,750 Words," as a "tension on the thread of meaning."[40] Russ, building on Delany's ideas, proposes that it represents not events that have happened (as reportage does) or events that could have happened (as naturalistic fiction does) or even events that could never have happened (as fantasy does); it represents events that have not happened . . . yet.[41] I would argue that something like this kind of subjunctivity is at work in "Notes on American Civilization," in its gestures toward a future that has yet to be fully realized but that is nonetheless—and this was critical to James's understanding of what he identified as the already-existing "socialism on the shop floor"[42]—already given, already operative in the present. But in these notes, that which has not happened is not just the full realization of American civilization that the notes anticipate. It is the full realization of *American Civilization*, the seventy-five-thousand-word essay to be read on a Sunday or in two evenings, the essay that would, James hoped, usher in the full realization of American civilization, the essay that the notes were in the throes of becoming.

So while we may want to question the realism and prescience (or lack thereof) of James's account of American civilization, we must not forget that this undocument is a representation of a document that itself has not happened. We may regret that in the notes James adopts idioms we would now refuse (imperialist idioms of "civilization," for example, or American exceptionalism), but these were merely provisional placeholders for another idiom, that of the masses themselves, workers but also African Americans, women, and youth (whose "work," again, troubles and expands the very notion of the worker), whose creative activities had yet

to be fully perceived but which the notes seek to render. And we might criticize James for his often sweeping claims about what "workers" or "the people" want, but we must recognize that he was very much in the middle of trying to figure out how to dissolve the very authorial voice he assumes as a matter of "convenience," that he could not at the moment see how not to assume, in order to begin these notes. If he writes, then, as a not yet fully rehabilitated vanguard intellectual, it is with the hope that he might find a way to begin to break down the distinction between the intellectual and the American masses. And if he writes as an undocumented alien observer, who remains outside the fray of American life and is, in a sense, appealing, through these very notes, (as Andrew Ross and Aldon Lynn Nielsen have argued) for permission to join the American masses as a fellow citizen, he also raises serious questions about the kind of submission such citizenship might entail, finding models for participation and belonging instead in the margins and in detention among other correspondents, other dissident drifters awaiting expulsion,[43] not in the space of the polis but its underground or outer edge, in those zones of contact or free association where unofficial and often criminalized modes of sociality persist as irreducible threats to the regulatory structures of the polis itself.

What James proposes, what his text anticipates, is nothing less than a new form of art, a new form for the work of art, one that would grow out of—and, at the same time, bring into being new forms of—sociality. What would this work of art look like? In attempting to define the form he seeks, James is clearest when articulating what it would not look like. He does, however, point to some examples in which we can see glimpses of the kind of writing he imagines for his work and for art in general, that "art for the mass openly and directly" that James insists must inevitably come, the art that would be the basis for the kind of participation and belonging he would like to imagine possible for the mass and for himself.

Such an art would go beyond the limited efforts of American literary intellectuals and even the abolitionist intellectuals to give form to the new social forces that they saw and sought to find a way to convey. It would be something like the drama of ancient Greece, which James characterizes as a social celebration, a public presentation of the great social problems that people face every day with an audience ready to judge and respond, "ready to participate to the full, its participation an integral part in the drama."[44] It would be something like this only more so, more like American popular

art, particularly cinema, since its mass appeal and its dependence on this very mass appeal comes closest now to the old ideal. The new art is perhaps most fully "achieved," or at least approached, James argues, in that central but anomalous work of nineteenth-century American literature, *Moby Dick*—not *Moby Dick* as it was but rather *Moby Dick* as it would be, for even *Moby Dick* has not happened yet, has not yet become what James argues it is or might be. As he puts it,

> Despite the limitations of his age, one modern writer did manage to achieve the genuine Aeschylean approach. The character of Ahab and the whole novel is as near an approach to the Greek concept as a modern writer has got. . . . One must imagine an America worried about democracy and individualism as America was worried at that time. One must imagine a Melville aware of the fact that the whole nation would gather on a certain day of national festival to listen to *Moby Dick* as a play or a film. Imagine too that Melville's writing would be profoundly affected by this. Then think of the character of Ahab and the others, and Melville's profound thesis presented to the people and a tremendous response by the whole nation to the dramatic presentation of fundamental problems. We then have some idea, however rough, of what the Greek drama was, and the failure of popular art today. So concrete and yet so profound were Melville's conceptions that his imagination in attempting to encompass all that he saw fell almost naturally into what can easily be read as a scenario for a type of film which modern filmmakers have not as yet even dreamt of. We shall take this up in time.[45]

What I am calling the subjunctivity or subjunctive poetics of *American Civilization* is, again, not necessarily encoded in the subjunctive verb form per se but can be registered here in all the modal auxiliaries, the "woulds" operating in this passage, for example, and the shades of time and mood they convey. It develops by way of all the "imagining" readers are asked to undertake individually but also en masse, as mass, which is to say, as a force for "if fifty million people react as individuals in a common way, they become or rather they are expressing a profound communal social force."[46] If "one" is to imagine a past that is still yet to come (the ancient Greece of radical democratic desire) in order to apprehend a future hidden in the crevices of the present, one must, at the same time, discover the beginnings of a possible, hypothetical future in this past, a projection

of what still has not even been imagined, the type of film for which this novel "can easily be read as a scenario," a film that would represent a fully realized coauthorship, involving both artist and mass audience. Concomitant with this coauthorship would be an expanded and integrated politics, not reducible to citizenship and the restricted and restrictive participation that citizenship allows—for "'my' country, democracy as voting, etc. are insufficient"[47]—but a politics in which the masses would be passionately engaged in reconstructing all aspects of society in order to solve, together, the fundamental problems put before them in the work of art. Such a politics would begin with their tremendous response to Melville's thesis, but the anticipation of this response would profoundly affect the formulation of that very thesis. James asks his readers to imagine this film as the form that would emerge from a genuine interplay between Melville's imagination and that of his audience. And he asks them to imagine that the exemplary audience for this authentic *Moby Dick*, which would receive and revise what they had already given to Melville and what Melville is giving back—with differences—would be like the "mass-revival meeting of Negroes just relieved from slavery"[48] ("workers" whose status would have rendered them ineligible for citizenship in both the United States and ancient Greece). Such a film would emerge, however, only in the imagining that James leads his readers through and that he promises he will lead his readers through as we "take this up in time."

If the various times toward which James gestures are present only in not having (yet) arrived, this is not necessarily a failure. For as much as James insists he can know what lies ahead, he does not know and does not want to know. And as much as he might wish to produce "a total picture of a society in movement," a literary masterpiece with no rough edges, no lingering evidence of the difficult collective process by which it was produced, he cannot and knows he cannot. He has committed himself to openness, to trial and error, to experiment, and to a future that he can only describe as a "great adventure." His aesthetic and political ideals ultimately undermine his attempts to reach anything like a fixed and complete account of the fulfillment of his aesthetic and political ideals. They work against the very idea of the work. But this incompleteness, or subjunctivity, is in itself a full and rich accounting, a powerful document, however improper and undone.

It is also, perhaps, a way of describing the exile, of the underground in which James remains, however ambivalently, based, the underground he

cannot seem to escape, of noncitizenship, the no-man's-land, the "desert" James finally chooses, however ambivalently, over the type of submission that citizenship demands. If he writes at one point, while appealing for legal citizenship, "I esteem citizenship as a privilege. But I also esteem myself as a person fit and proper to be a citizen and a citizen who would be of some value to his fellow-citizens," he also declares, "But never shall I submit myself to any inquisition and grovel in the dirt . . . for citizenship. . . . That would be to make freedom of speech and freedom of opinion a mockery. I will have no part in it and will live in the desert first."[49] The desert or no-man's-land of noncitizenship, which he experiences while in detention on Ellis Island as a projection "onto an island isolated from the rest of society," is, however, filled with men, "perhaps a thousand men, sailors, 'isolatoes,' renegades and castaways from all parts of the world,"[50] dissident drifters like James himself (who is later detained again in Trinidad, by the very Trinidadian state he helps found). And these men, these lowly internees, do not only have a rich understanding of the world; they are an active and potent force within it and between and beyond its boundaries: "These men, taken as a whole, know the contemporary world and know it better than many world-famous foreign correspondents. . . . They are for the most part, as far as I could judge, the most militant enemies of tyranny in the world."[51] Indeed, these men act as correspondents of the most radical kind. James relays the story of mutual aid and assistance, in which a young sailor helps fugitives escape a brutal regime, is imprisoned, is liberated when "word gets out," but then chooses to stay in prison a while longer so that he himself can spread word about conditions in the prison and collect messages to relay to the outside. "At any moment," he argues, "a man in the same ward in the infirmary can tell you of events of similar range and scope. And it means nothing to them. That is how they live."[52]

If, as James notes, "these [men] were federated by nothing," they are "looking for federation."[53] They seek, above all, association or "intimate communion with [their] fellows."[54] So, too, do the disenfranchised wildcat workers, African Americans, women, and youth whom James gravitates toward in the United States, who, in embarking on the "great adventure" of "building and rebuilding and reorganizing the whole social structure," will, James insists, establish new social relations grounded in democracy and equality, social relations of "a subtlety and intimacy that we know nothing about."[55] While James seems to exclude himself from this

federation, these new social relations among correspondents, he imagines the dissolution of the grounds for such exclusion in a new society in which "the worker as such and the thinker as such will disappear,"[56] the distance between them finally bridged as the work that would seek to mediate between them, to establish a reciprocal penetration between them, itself disappears. Through this federation, enacted through reciprocal penetration, James gestures toward the possibility of the emergence or reemergence of something like a motley crew that is already in effect, among these other "correspondents," in the way they live.

The idea of a book or book-like entity, a book "in quotation marks," a book that is not a book, titled at one point *Newyorkaises*, which would "gather" and "enrich" all the documents Oiticica had produced in exile emerged midway through Oiticica's stay in New York.[57] It is proposed and reproposed in many of the letters sent from the *Babylônests*. As he wrote, at one point, in a letter addressed to the poet Allen Ginsberg, whom he wished to involve in the endeavor (or rather a "sketch of a letter . . . to be typed and thus transformed"), "this publication will function as a gathering of projects for experimental activities and propositions and also as a record of some experiments anonymously carried out and general ideas based/developed on the outcome/crisis/possible consequences of extreme problems which present themselves as *opened* rather than tending to a solution."[58] This would be a project, developed in and through the superattunement and frenetic activity, fueled by cocaine, which kept him up at all hours, sometimes for days at a time, reading and writing while, at the same time, immersing himself in rock music and other popular art forms accessed through the many mass communications media that articulated the permeable boundary or interface of the Nests. He undertook this project in the company of the various visitors who entered into the Nests through this interface and the other portals through which the social relations that developed within the Nest were extended or given the potential for being extended.

One proposal for this project is recorded on the flip side, literally "side B," of the "PARA AUGUSTO DE CAMPOS" tape, in which Oiticica had imagined the possibility of an expanded form of citizenship or participation through rock music. It begins with a reference to the presence of someone whose name becomes inaudible or indecipherable, transcribed

only as "(?)" Oiticica notes his resistance to writing because he has done so much writing. He imagines a book that would remix this writing, which he begins to think of here as "blocks," structures he borrows from the concrete poet Haroldo de Campos, Augusto's brother.

> FOR AUGUSTO DE CAMPOS SIDE B (000)
>
> Note: this side begins with the continuation of the music of Jimi Hendrix
>
> Yeah! man, speed too much! Yeah, yeah, yeah, come on cousin [cocaine], come on! oh well: indeed Augusto (deep breath) the thing is this, I don't even know how long it has been since I have spoken to you, with Haroldo, but I don't have the desire to write, I have done so much written work, this thing of this book, well book between quotation marks, no? I have this notion of parts, taking from Haroldo [de Campos], I call block[s], in which there is really no continuation between one thing and another, a block is really the ideal thing for this . . . [I]t has a lot of sessions. . . . well, I am going to place various things of yours, things that in this way mingle with others in this way. I have discussed this a lot with [the U.S. graphic designer] Quentin [Fiore]. . . . He was saying something that I adore, it is that when he is all set with his materials, he throws everything on the floor, shuffles everything again, [and] all of a sudden the things take another course. . . . [In] this case I have not done this, that is clear, but it has a bit of this feeling, all of a sudden it [turns out] that a thing that was in one session, should be in the other, that it is more enriched there, I don't know . . .[59]

What was to be "gathered" and "enriched" in such a discontinuous or "conglomerated" book (which Oiticica later renamed *Conglomerado*),[60] in the series of the "blocks" that were to constitute it, was all the written work Oiticica refers to, new experiments that would take shape not as objects but as works on paper or rather works completed or outlined on paper, the proposals developed throughout the incredible mass of documents produced within the Nests. This had been Oiticica's primary occupation or preoccupation. As he later recalled, "I worked on many projects completed, outlined. The majority of things were completed on paper. Which is to say, I am wanting to publish this whole thing that I call *Conglomerado*, because this was an intentional thing, to not continue to make objects."[61]

For Oiticica, the work succeeds and exceeds the object, the object as work, the work as object, which had, as "a new category, or a new mode of aesthetic proposition," in the form of, for example, the *Parangolé*, itself succeeded and exceeded the traditional work of art as fixed form and opened the way, beyond the transcendental contemplation and bourgeois consumption of the traditional artwork, toward what Mário Pedrosa had called "the experimental exercise of freedom."[62] Oiticica drafted a series of declarations on this point in notes written in the Nests, on March 22, 1972, under the heading "TO EXPERIMENT [ATTEMPT/TRY/] THE EXPERIMENTAL" (a translation into English of some of his own notes), including these:

> *the experimental [exercise] of liberty* evoked by MARIO PEDRÓSA consists not in the "creation of works" but in *the initiative in taking over the experimental*[63]
>
> *the experimental* has no boundaries to itself it is the metacritique of the "production of works" by the producing artist[64]
>
> the scattered roots/loosen[ed] threads of the experimental are sprung energies for an open number of possibilities[65]

If the object still had to be dispensed with or "overcome," it was because it threatened to reimpose boundaries, close down possibilities. If the object or transobject had become, for Oiticica, "a passage to experiences increasingly engaged with the individual behaviour of each spectator,"[66] that object, even in its unconditioned or transobjective form, still threatened to become an end in itself. As such, it would become fixed in its expression, a closed, completed work, which would exclude and alienate its viewers by making itself available only for the limited and limiting contemplation or consumption from which they had, through experimentation, been released. The danger posed by such fixation had already moved Oiticica, in 1967 to declare, "The most important proposition of the object, of the makers of objects . . . would be that of a new perceptual behaviour, created through increasing spectator participation, eventually overcoming the object as the end of aesthetic expression."[67] It had moved him to embark on the search for the "Supra-sensorial," which would move toward "de-alienating the individual" by "furnishing him with propositions which are open to his imaginative, interior exercise." With the appearance of the Supra-sensorial, he anticipated, "the very 'making of the work' would

be violated, as would interior 'elaboration,' since the real 'making' would be the individual's life experience."[68] The documents Oiticica produced within the Nests would take up this search, only now the orientation would not be toward any recovery or "retaking" of intuition and aspirations. The individual and the individual's life experience would be violated or dissolved and absorbed within the "necessity" that Oiticica's posits of "the new community" pursued in and through the Nests. The documents aspired to extend the leisure/pleasure developed in the Nests beyond the confines of the Nests by becoming the kind of "open propositions" whose realization would violate their own making through performances. In and through such performances, the work—not as object but in the leisure/pleasure of *Crelazer*—would take flight and leave home.

Oiticica was constantly seeking to imagine new forms through which such performances could take shape. Performance was conceived not as something "preformed" that an audience would contemplate or add to but as something in formation that would be realized through "simultaneous action" in which an audience, itself in formation, would be engaged:

> to propose a type of activity that might not be irremediably reduced to the contemplation of the finished [long dash][69]
>
> Perform has always been = preform but the putting in play of performance no longer as a completion of something, adding something more, but as simultaneous action, not preformed but in formation, gives to the concept another standing: that of problem, allied to that of the spectator-object contemplated, work finished-work open, etc.: is elevated to the level of process.[70]

Performance is an expanded form of dance; it is "play," open experimentation, realized in "INVENTION PLAY." This is what the propositions, the works completed or outlined (or to be completed or outlined), seek to initiate.

Some of these activities could be performed anywhere, anytime, through environmental manifestations to be dispersed, exploded, and projected into the world beyond the Nests where they were first incubated and hatched. They were imagined and occasionally attempted (in subways, against the backdrop of skyscrapers, and elsewhere in New York, for example), as new *Parangolé* retheorized as "programs of the circumstantial," as "that which is sensory object but cannot be reduced to such": the object

turned "object-event," an instance of the "meetings-events of experimentalism," an "open experimentalism" that is, finally, nothing more than "the adoption of the power to invent" anywhere, anytime.[71]

Other projects entailed the production of new environments. Among the earliest were propositions, not initially meant to remain on paper, for the "*subterranean* TROPICÁLIA PROJECTS" initiated in 1971 shortly after Oiticica moved to the United States. Oiticica attempted to pursue these projects. He wanted to construct the *Penetrables* that were to make up this project not in a museum, as he had with the Nests at MoMA, but in the very open, very public space of Central Park. In these, he revisited and reconceived what he had already begun in Brazil, most notably in *Tropicália*, in which he had offered, on the one hand, a specifically Brazilian image for the international art world and, on the other hand, an environmental project in which the image—the rethinking of which had been necessitated by his break with painting and then again by his study of samba—would not be an end, like the end he feared in the object, but an "experimental field."[72] Such a field would effect "the denial of the artist as a creator of objects." The artist instead would become instead "a proposer of practices" whose simple and yet general propositions would suggest nothing more than "situations to be lived."[73]

The proposals for the various components that Oiticica imagined for the "*subterranean* TROPICÁLIA PROJECTS" took shape as descriptions, sketches, even maquettes that map a series of interconnected *Penetrables* meant to be passed through but also lingered in. "The idea," he states, "is to create various possibilities of *performances*: a kind of dissecting of the concept."[74] While these experimental fields revived elements from the original *Tropicália* installation, they functioned less like images and more like gathering places and stages for collective performances. One *Penetrable* included long, dark corridors made of vinyl or canvas, "in which people can penetrate tightly and feel others going through," another area in which "propositions for different things are interchanged, and people can act, or talk or do whatever comes to their minds to the passing . . . people," a series of small cabins or "stops on the corridor-like structure with propositions, . . . poetic devices for one single person at a time as if proposing a look into themselves," and a space with various pathways that all end in a common area, in which those who arrive can "mingle."[75] For another *Penetrable*, Oiticica specified that equipment should be on hand, available for

anyone to use. The project as a whole and its scrambled trajectory ("COME AND GO STOP STAY WANDER PLAY"), which Oiticica thought of as "a parody-critique of the so-called 'free creative activities' of the proletariat," would initiate an "exercise of leisure with no specific end" as a situation to be lived offered by the proposal.[76]

Unable to secure funding for these large-scale undertakings, Oiticica rerouted his energies into the smaller-scale, more private spaces of *Babylônests* and later *Hendrixsts* as alternative space in which various open-ended leisure activities would unfold, in and from which others—the series of interlinked spaces he describes in the film scripts he wrote in these Nests, for example, or the spaces in which bodies and structural elements intermingle and merge with the wider world staged by the slide shows and soundtracks he produced for *Neyrótika* or the *BLOCK EXPERIMENTS IN COSMOCOCA*, all erotically charged—still continue to be imagined.

Oiticica also rerouted his energies into elaborating various versions of his initial proposals, seeking not just a way of reimagining the environmental manifestation or the experimental field but a way of reimagining the proposal itself as a form. His exploration of this form was extended in other proposals, including the many drafts of the *BLOCK EXPERIMENTS IN COSMOCOCA* and *Newyorkaises* itself. Oiticica conceived of the proposals for the performances he envisioned as works to be completed on paper, even if what they proposed, even if that to which they aspired, could not be. But he was also conscious that if these proposals remained on paper, they were in danger of becoming or being regarded as objects or works in the traditional sense and, by extension, as unachievable visions, impossible projects or projections. These "are not plans to remain on paper," he insists. "I am not a 'conceptual artist' and never was."[77] He adds, "My projects are, above and beyond anything else, projects to be executed, and I detest the idea that they might be utopian."[78] And yet, as we shall see, most of these projects did remain "on paper." By the end of his stay in New York, he later recalled, he had amassed two file cabinets full of such documents, experimental things meant "to be followed through" but that had been tested only in fits and starts.[79] The works, and the zones of contact in and out of which they emerged and were submerged, expanded and transformed by way of Oiticica's constant revisitation and revision. He waited,

in the Nests, for something that "lies in wait for the possibility to manifest itself"; awaiting or "ultrawaiting" (to recall the term he used to describe the temporality of the Nests) the time and place in which his proposals could be "followed through." The proposal, composed here of sketches, models, instructions, and so forth, was always reaching toward a beyond, toward its own dissolution.

If, in writing, James picked up the threads of the long line of unfinished, unpublished undocuments that make up the Marxist tradition, Oiticica understood his work to be rooted in the constructivist tradition in European art and in the work of Piet Mondrian. In New York, toward the very beginning of his stay there, Oiticica went to see some of Mondrian's paintings at the Guggenheim Museum, a building that had been designed by the architect Frank Lloyd Wright. There, he reaffirmed the link between Mondrian's efforts and his own: "MONDRIAN is or evokes my beginning : where would we be without him : which is to say on the day of nov. 13, 71?"[80] The paintings Oiticica gravitated toward on that day are among Mondrian's last paintings, the ones he reworked continuously, particularly *Victory Boogie Woogie*, the one that remained unfinished at his death in 1944 and in which Oiticica saw the limits of painting. In recounting his viewing experience, Oiticica invokes the interpretation of Mondrian's project given by the Brazilian poet-critic Ferreira Gullar in the context of the neoconcrete movement,

> Mondrian stripped the canvas, withdraws all the vestiges of the object from it, not just its figure, but also the color, the matter and the space that constitute the universe of representation: leaves the canvas white. The painter will no longer represent the object upon it : it is the space where the world is harmonized according to the two basic movements of the horizontal and the vertical. With the elimination of the represented object, the canvas—as material presence—becomes the new object of the painter. To the painter it falls to organize but also to give it a transcendence that subtracts the obscurity of material object. The fight against the object continues.[81]

But for Oiticica, "victory" is given by way of a different understanding of the relation between organization and transcendence. Oiticica insists elsewhere that Mondrian's paintings "live better" in his studio, "in the environment he created for their condition, for the birth of each work," than they do in the museum or the world of art and commerce.[82] In other words, Mondrian's paintings live better when they are unfinished, when their relation to external

space is given not symbolically on the canvas, but in a way that is almost raised up off the canvas, by pieces of tape that mark their being still embedded in the compositional process. Indeed, photographs of Mondrian's studios show that the paintings' elements, the blocks of color or color-structures, spread beyond the frame onto the walls, into the space of the room. This is particularly true of *Victory Boogie Woogie*, which Mondrian continued to remake until his death, refusing ultimately to reincorporate those elements within the frame, fixing them as paint on the canvas. Victory in this painting is not in the confinement of these elements within the order imposed by the "two basic movements of the horizontal and the vertical," not in their return to the space of the work, the canvas Mondrian has cleansed. Victory is in the very act of spilling out into the environment and in the reconfiguration of the environment that act makes possible, a reconfiguration that, as Oiticica notes, Mondrian always anticipated when he imagined that his paintings would prepare people for a future in which they would create their own environments.[83] What he finds in *Victory Boogie Woogie* is not a cleansing that leaves the historical experience of expropriation and displacement behind. For that experience is carried forward in the boogie-woogie that animates this painting, replacing the fixed horizontal and vertical lines of the grid as organizing principle with a pulsing rhythm that is unconfined by the limits of the canvas and the museum as its new home. Oiticica hears boogie-woogie's vibrations echoing, in the spiral ramp of the Guggenheim, through the footwork of Fred Astaire:

> LLOYD WRIGHT made the GUGGENHEIM for painting : MONDRIAN limit-case of this : in the ramp the glorification of the horizontal-vertical continues: the descent connects one painting-fragment with another : suspension, time : to BROADWAY BOOGIE-WOOGIE, end of the glide through the highest of the high vibrations in the VICTORY BOOGIE WOOGIE limits of painting : MONDRIAN gives more than all the pictorial meals in the world : enigma-key of liberation : thoughts all present : music, tap dancing of Astaire.[84]

Astaire's dancing is rooted in and routed through the aesthetic sociality of blackness. The compositional force carried forward in the rhythm that Oiticica hears here, however many times removed from the scene of boogie-woogie's performance in the turpentine camps of Texas or the jazz clubs that Mondrian frequented in New York or even the rock music that Oiticica heard over the radio, suggests other possibilities. In this violation

of the integrity of the work and dispersal of its elements into the world for new constructions, the rigidity of the horizontal and the vertical glides toward uncontained excrescence. The enigma-key of liberation is in this uncontainment. The blackness within the *Barracão* that the Nests attempt to realize, carrying forward the structural principles of the improvised *barraco* or the *barracão* of *condomblé*, and that carry forward the structural principles of the improvised *barraco* or the *barracão* of *condomblé*, (and which parallels the social insurgency that James highlights within the barrack ranges that were meant to contain it), is the collective experimentation that was essential for surviving the brutal forms of conditioning and regulation imposed in the barracoon. It is the relay, the act of carrying forward that legacy of radical collective experimentation again in those spaces that it does not properly belong, that Oiticica's open works attempt to extend.

What was for James a vanishing is for Oiticica a violation of its own making in a new sociality. It is, at the same time, insistent in its materiality. It seeks to open performances that would exceed the object as work, the work as object, but it can only do so by first becoming one, by assuming some sort of definitive form, however provisional that definitive form might be. Which is to say, if there is a constant search for a form for performance and a form of the proposition of these performances, there is also a constant search for a form through which the propositions for these performances, Oiticica's works on paper, could be brought together and made available to audiences, through which the conditions for simultaneous action could be established—and, as we shall see, also controlled. Within and alongside these propositions appear various propositions for such a form of organization. They emerge out of a desire for the work and what it could make possible but also a deliberate resistance to it.

This work would necessarily be a very different kind of work, a repertory, an open set of "programs in progress," a book, *Newyorkaises*, or the less site-specific, even less coherent *Conglomerado*. Oiticica had proposed for his "*subterranean* TROPICÁLIA PROJECTS" the idea of a repertory of ideas for the types of performances that might develop within these *Penetrables*, a repertory that began to take on a life of its own, particularly when it became evident that Oiticica would not, for financial and logistical reasons, be able to build and install the *Penetrables* he had envisioned for Central Park. These works on paper, then, were accompanied: "NOTE:

concerning the simple and general propositions mentioned, I am making a kind of repertory of ideas that I eventually have for them." The proposed repertory would be "a collection of propositions for various projects: performances, films, printed matter, sound-tracks, developments of other propositions," which "should of course be discussed and participated with group-work on the projects." Such items "do not have one destination but will be in store for any utilization desired afterwards: the collection of idea-suggestions for such utilization would be considered part of a repertory: as cell-ideas not submitted to definite formal ends."[85] Later, in an expansion of this idea, he describes the repertory as "'presented' open-images"; he only ever offered four images, "not a 'representation' of anything 'significant' : poetically given reportorial images."[86] The images he provided were four black-and-white photographs: one of the *Babylônests*; one of a woman and boy standing in the doorway of a ramshackle house, an example of vernacular architecture in northeastern Brazil; one of a poem by Augusto de Campos (consisting of one word, "SUBSISTO," spread across two pages of an open book); and one of the dead body of Carlos Lamarca, a Brazilian guerrilla fighter in the 1970s.[87] In this repertory then, the structure of the Nests as the site and scene of experimentation is linked to another improvised vernacular architectural form, as had been the case with the *Parangolé*. If the *Parangolé*'s public inauguration pointed up the "adversity" within which such forms were forged, "SUBSISTO" makes a similar acknowledgment, as does the body of Lamarca, another outlaw whose dissident desires were antithetical to the notion of freedom imposed by the state. These, Oiticica seems to suggest, would be not the end but the necessary starting point for the kind of experimentation he imagined.

The "program in progress" that Oiticica calls the *BLOCK EXPERIMENTS IN COSMOCOCA* was also posited as an open, ever-mutating, expansive sets of materials that would continue to grow and transform. The *BLOCK EXPERIMENTS IN COSMOCOCA* were to be offered in and as something like a do-it-yourself kit for new spaces that would themselves be, like the programs of the circumstantial, open to "administration" almost anywhere. Born, in 1973, out of a "monumental hoax," a "parody" of authorship and plagiarism, aesthetic absorption and consumption, that began with one long night in which Oiticica and his friend, the Brazilian underground filmmaker Neville D'Almeida, snorted cocaine from lines drawn on the cover of Frank Zappa's album *Weasels Ripped My Flesh*. The

first five block experiments emerged in and as a series of slides of such lines, drawn and redrawn over existing images—book, album, and magazine covers and documents of *Parangolé* performances—like makeup (*maquilagem* or *mancoquilagem*, a term D'Almeida coined by combining the words for "makeup" and "coke"), exaggerating or adding features with bright-white lines that diminish over the course of the series as they are put into play in other ways by Oiticica's and D'Almeida's snorting. Marilyn Monroe's face, for example, pictured on the cover of Norman Mailer's biography, is given exaggerated eyebrows and eyeliner and lipstick but is also cut by a line that runs across her face. The white cover of John Cage's *Notations* is addended with lines, then scattered lines, only subtly evident, in a tribute to Malevich's *Suprematist Composition: White on White*. Hendrix's face, as pictured on the *War Heroes* album cover, is covered with lines that recall tribal markings. Drug paraphernalia—knives, straws, and so on—are deployed within the pictures as building blocks of the experimental attempt to forge an alternative, "exploded" form of visual or audiovisual production by moving the work beyond the telic image and its "effectiveness as the behavior-matrix which immobilized the spectator" (100) and toward something new that would negate the unilateral character of the image and set the spectator in motion.

These images of reconfigured images would be supplemented by detailed directives for their projection in and as either public or private performances. The directives included notes about how the images would be projected: randomly, in conjunction (but in no way synchronized) with prerecorded soundtracks (mix tapes composed of rock music and/or "chance/semi chance operations [typewriting/whistling/dialing/fiddling-about]" and/or the sounds of Second Avenue); on the surfaces of various appropriated environments, which would be further structured by special lighting and by various other "elements" that would be conducive of leisure or pleasure. "CC3," for example, calls for the projection of the *Maileryn* slides in a room with a floor surface made of "thick durable transparent vinyl over sand arranged DUNEWISE" and filled with "virgin balloons to be distributed for the blowing-up/letting down (with a whistle)" (112). The Hendrix-*War* images of "CC5" would be projected in a room filled with hammocks "SUSPENDED IN THE AIR: BODYWISE: ABOVE THE GROUND: HAMMOCKS-HANGING-COCOONWISE:)" (116). "CC4," in which the *Nocagions* slides would be projected, lists a swimming pool as the first required element of its

"landscape." In these contexts, the slides become more than visual or even audio-visual "as their programming when put into performance enlarges the scope of the projected succession . . . . . enriched as they become relative within a kind of corny environment" (101). The slides would also be accompanied by instructions for actions to be taken by whatever audiences might construct and enter into these environments as these audiences engaged the experiments and took them further into uncharted territory.

On the one hand, these slides represent successive static positions that would seem to be self-enclosed: "frames-moments INSTAMOMENTS . . . crystalline one-by-one never adding up to something but in themselves something . . . moments (NOWandNOWandNOWand . . . . .) (99). On the other hand,

> COSMOCOCA is the supreme game-joke in which we play with SIMULTANEITY and CONTIGUITY and the multitude of possibilities of individual experience (103)

> The visual—is relative and plays with the whole it proposes to embrace: in short . . . IMAGE is not the works supreme motive or unifying end. (100)

If, in "TROPICÁLIA, IMAGE" (the new discovery or re-creation of what had been prompted, earlier, by Oiticica's experience of dance) was displaced "through a kind of multi-media salad without the obtrusive dressing of 'sense' or 'point of view'" (100), it is, in the *BLOCK EXPERIMENTS IN COSMOCOCA*, not "disposed of" but "enriched": it is "non-unifying but becomes play-part of the fragmented game which originates in experimental positing taken to a limit." (100). And this game would be elaborated through the flight plans (out of the Nests and beyond) that Oiticica provided:

> PERFORMANCE-GAMES plus: INSTRUCTIONS for private PERFORMANCE for small number of people indoors or outdoors and for public PERFORMANCE aiming at groupal games-experiments: to follow INSTRUCTIONS is to open oneself to GAME and PARTICIPATION the raison d'être of these CC's; to ignore INSTRUCTIONS is to close oneself off and not participate in the experiment: so . . . where are you at? (102)

It would not be a work but "SOMETHING NEW . . . SOMETHINGELSE" Oiticica suggests, by way of statements by the Brazilian concrete

poet Décio Pignatari that he includes in the "DATA" that he provides for the spectator. It would be "neither a work nor a not-work," since "there is no work. even calling it open-work is merely an attempt to salvage the idea of work" (105). It would instead be the "INVENTION DISCOVERY EXPERIMENTATION" of an openness otherwise suppressed in the work. "COSMOCOCA," Oiticica writes in the preface to these instructions, is a "world-name proposing not a 'point of view' but a WORLD-INVENTION program" (102).

The *BLOCK EXPERIMENTS IN COSMOCOCA* would expand, Oiticica imagined, not only through the performances that they would each set the stage for but in and through the inscription and extension each openly invites. They are not only subject to unexpected development by way of audience participation but, as a group, continually growing as Oiticica adds and invites others to help him revise and extend the first five block experiments and add more to the program.

Authorship is expanded, then, not only in the "hoax" with which Oiticica together with D'Almeida began and in the plagiarism and the forms of collaboration that developed within and out of it (including a "scrambling of roles") but also in the other collaborations, imagined and pursued for further block experiments. Authorship expands, also, by way of dedications that point to inspirations (to, for example, "Cage: precursor/cursor of the performance" [118]) and in invitations to revise and extend these proposals. One such invitation is to be extended to the de Campos brothers: "PROPOSITION/GIVEWISE—CC4 COPY 1 . . . will be presented to DE CAMPOS brothers along with INSTRUCTIONS for PERFORMANCE and a PROPOSAL inviting them to contribute—INVENT and/or TRANSFORM the INSTRUCTIONS for a PERFORMANCE in SÃO PAULO or RIO" (115). Another is to be extended to artist Carlos Vergara to put together the elements for a new block experiment to take shape "according to VERGARA'S choice of chance decision" at "ST. CARLOS HILL: ZEZE's house; ROSE'S mother" (106–7). Included in the program in progress are detailed instructions for Vergara and a note: "NOTE . . . these are suggestions and as such should be considered relative rather than taken as limitations: VERGARA should not use them unless stimulated by them: INSTRUCTIONS here may inhibit rather than open up the game" (107). And the program will, of course, be extended in its performance:

> Shifts and changes are part of its inventive structure and also (mainly!) the chance-situations which occur as a decisive step for its different let-outs—the program as such is an open-program in progress and it is impossible to determine the whole of its possible scope or what it will add up to . . . also because some of its aspects (most!) press upon proposing possible experimental situations to other people . . . whether collectively during PERFORMANCES or by invitation, etc.: the main point is considering an EXPERIMENTAL activity is . . . by not limiting such an activity to its originators but . . . by creating multiple let-outs for collective and individual participation.[88]

But here too Oiticica could not bring himself to totally abandon the idea of the complete and coherent work of art. For how exactly would such anti- or antework, these flight plans, this expanding collection of programs in progress that Oiticica at one point refers to simply as "the thing" finally be realized? How were or are they to be transmitted from the crevices of the Nests to the multiple audiences that would enter into and reinvent them? How could they be transmitted without risking their degradation through parasitism and/or misuse? On the one hand, Oiticica wanted to keep them a secret by strictly limiting their exposure. They circulated, at first, only minimally and very secretly among close friends and associates. "Very few people know of it," Oiticica told the poet Waly Salomão at the time; "if you speak of it I will kill you."[89] Perhaps because they were often structured around illicit and illegal activities or perhaps because of Oiticica's own illegal status, he kept these not-works, which he considered groundbreaking—"pure dynamite"—mostly underground. All components were kept in Oiticica's Nests, where they could be safeguarded while they gestated. At the same time, however, Oiticica was very concerned that the components be "decentralized" (which is to say, not centralized in his possession or in New York City, hub of both the art market and the empire beneath and against which they had been formulated).[90] To decentralize, there must be, first and foremost, the copying (and copying and copying . . .), a brutal labor, a *loucura* or madness of reproduction, he insists.[91] But what to do with all these copies? There are various references in Oiticica's notes to plans for the future of the *BLOCK EXPERIMENTS IN COSMOCOCA*, for the writing of a history of their invention, for the production and sale of a set of numbered, limited-edition copies of their key components, for the

development of an inexpensive bilingual text about them to be distributed prior to their release, and for ads announcing their availability and inviting consumers to place orders. Provisions were also perpetually made for their delivery (with additional instructions) via airmail to various collaborators around the world, especially in Brazil, who would be invited to further elaborate and, ideally, perform them. Oiticica was very concerned that they be published in some form—which is perhaps to say documented in some official way, some way that would be recognized or at least recognizable—before any public performances, in order to protect them from misinterpretation and misuse (before opening them up for general and unforeseeable use) and to guarantee that their impact as he anticipated it (even as he did not wish to anticipate it) would not be undermined. None of these ever materialized, however, and the *BLOCK EXPERIMENTS IN COSMOCOCA* remained in the Nests.

The "book in quotation marks" called *Newyorkaises* is what ultimately became of this remainder, of all the remainders of Oiticica's experiments (even as they continued to transmute), and of Oiticica's remaining, his waiting. *Newyorkaises*, as he came to call it, was to be the work to be completed or outlined on paper in which all of the works to be completed or outlined on paper, all the programs and programs in progress and so forth, that Oiticica undertook in New York would be conglomerated.

Though, as I have noted, Oiticica later referred to the project as *Conglomerado*, in an undated entry in a notebook (identified in the archive as "bloco amarelo" [yellow notebook]) written between October 11, 1971, and September 15, 1973,[92] he tested out several possible titles for the book he had begun to imagine. Here, the word *Newyorkaises*, identified as French (the attachment of the French suffix *-aises* suggesting simply "of or from New York"), appears at the top of a list of cross-linguistic permutations and puns, in and between French, English, and Portuguese ("French, mixed Eng.-French, Eng., mixed Eng. Port., plain Port., and mixed Eng.-Port."). It is accompanied, for example, by the "English" term "NEWYORCASES," beneath which Oiticica adds the phrase "Wall St. Record Storage Co.," referring, presumably, to the two large file cabinets in which he was amassing all the works on paper destined for inclusion in the book. It is also accompanied by the term "NEYKOSMOSIS Eng." (which appears between "NEWKOSMAISES AND NEYKOSMAISES," both listed as "mixed Eng.-French"), which anticipates the "cosmicity" of the *BLOCK EXPERIMENTS*

IN COSMOCOCA." If the list begins and ends with a seemingly simple invocation of belonging to or in New York, in other terms and in the play between terms, other meanings arise. While it is *Newyorkaises* that Oiticica used in later documents (it was only after leaving New York that he renamed it *Conglomerado*), this word gathers and carries all of these other permutations with it, as it becomes the name under which he attempts to create something like a "work" from or for the nonworks he has been amassing.

The most complete version of what Oiticica imagined as or for *Newyorkaises* consists of four pages of scrawled handwriting, undated (or, rather, inundated with dates) and titled "INDISPENSABLES FOR *NEWYORKAISES*/what lacks PLANNING AND/OR PROVIDING."[93] These four pages provide a master plan for the itemization and organization of all these proposals or programs in progress, which would constitute what Oiticica called, in the taped recording addressed to Augusto de Campos, a "block." If, as Oiticica notes, he borrows the term "block" from Haroldo de Campos, this term also accumulates multiple meanings in Oiticica's notes, connoting a very solid, concrete object but also a disruption or barrier, a geographical-social formation (which Oiticica explored in his notebooks through the work of Marshall McLuhan), a temporary political alliance, and in Portuguese (*bloco*), a group of carnival revelers not organized by any procession, or a notebook—like the one in which this list of indispensables would appear.

What we see in this particular list of "indispensibles" is something like a table of contents that lists new *Parangolé* propositions involving many friends—not the *Penetrables* he had proposed for the "*subterranean* TROPICÁLIA PROJECTS" but designs for other *Penetrables*, complex structures to be further articulated by musical recordings and dedicated to the friends who inspired them; the *BLOCK EXPERIMENTS IN COSMOCOCA*, as well as a spin-off document, a "BLOCK-SECTION detailed advertising pamphlet by itself, for the sale of the CC sets"; a "BLOCK SECTION" called "BODYWISE"; and a "Roman—*program in progress* BLOCK-SECTION"; among many other items. The descriptions given in each entry suggest that these items were to assume a range of forms: portions of works by other artists, to be excerpted or photographed or solicited; other series of potential images to be found or made; mix tapes; transcriptions of the recorded conversations that Oiticica called "raps in progress"; the questionnaire

(or "questionnaire in progress") that he intended to distribute; and proposals—sketches, descriptions, and instructions—for performances, to be staged with/for specific collaborators or to be undertaken by future readers.

The document assumes the form of a to-do list in media res. There are marginal notes and insertions indicating work done and yet to be done. Some entries include lists of items needed, some of which are marked "ready" or "already in" or are crossed out and have "OK" written next to them, indicating either that they have been obtained or that Oiticica changed his mind about crossing them out. There are, moreover, numerous insertions in the list, such as "ADD made May 6 74 ROMERO satin snake headband photo text PROPOSITION." Some of these items, lists within the larger list, are still provisional. In the "BODYWISE BLOCK-SECTION," for example, he offers descriptions of three photos that will constitute a "SAMPLE SITUATION *ACTUAL BODY TRASMUTATION*," "TRANSEXUAL CUNT PHOTOS" of or by (it is not quite clear) "LUCIOLA." A note suggests that he must still decide whether to use one or all of them. In other cases, he offers precise, or almost precise, instructions regarding how these items are to appear on the printed page. Item 11, the "ROMAN" program in progress "BLOCK SECTION," for example, proposes the juxtaposition of images and texts of New York City, Wall Street in particular, with images and texts of ancient Rome (whose decline he links, through a passage from Hegel, to the various forms of decadent spectatorship it indulged in), expanding on the association he has already made in his association of New York with a "Babylon." For the "ULTIMATELY MICK JAGGER NEW BLOCK-SECTION," he suggests using a two-sided printed page with rounded corners as used in playing cards and proposes "PHOTO-PAGES-MONTAGE: PLAY/PUN: INVENTIVENESS: quotations freely laid out."

There are notes about the ordering or arrangement of the items listed, even the list itself. Not only does Oiticica number each item and subitem (though the order he establishes is somewhat undermined by all the insertions and marginalia, not to mention the many arrows and parenthetical instructions to "see item 2," for example, or "transfer to OCT. 11, 71 BLOCK-SECTION," all of which disrupt the linearity of this list), but he also indicates, for example, in a marginal note, that item 9, "CLOTHING-CAPE PARANGOLÉ PROPOSITIONS" (or possibly item 9, "BRAZILIAN

EXPERIMENTALITY," itself broken into a list of names of artists and in some cases titles of relevant works) consists of or will consist of "INSERTIONS INTO BLOCK-SECTIONS AND SPARSELY IN MID-BLOCK-SECTIONS." Item 12 indicates that he has yet to decide "HOW WHAT WHY IF [each word enclosed in a box] about THE INCLUSION of *questionnaire in progress*" but suggests, "maybe split it throughout different BLOCK-SECTIONS within the book." One set of items, rife with arrows that draw several paths through and across the text, lead to a solitary line from the Rolling Stones song "Sympathy for the Devil" that reads like a humorous commentary on all these instructions, "What's puzzling you is the nature of my game," that is meant to appear, just prior to the "COSMOCOCA" section, as a block unto itself.[94]

Certain entries are circled. Others are starred. Different colored inks and even colored pencil are used, and there are stains and smears suggesting many returns, by Oiticica and perhaps others, to this document and the supplements that immediately sprang from it. Another to-do list, or provisions list, "connected to INDISPENSIBLES—etc.————" holds prior notes to be consulted, people to be drawn in, items to be obtained, tasks to be completed, including careful planning of their graphic form: "delineate areas for typesetting on tracing-paper, locating position with respect to letters design."[95] And this is only one moment within the production of this list. Many of the notes Oiticica wrote in New York continue to refer back to it and addend and elaborate it, proposing new projects and "final layouts" for old ones.

That nothing recognizable as a book ever came together should come as no surprise. Oiticica struggled to figure out how these proposals could reach, be taken up, and followed through by audiences in the United States, Brazil, and beyond while resisting his own impulse to confine them in the recognizable, easily circulated, adjudicable form of the book. For there is, at the same time, in Oiticica's work the trace of a desire for the book, for the work, for its capacity to be given, passed, exported, traded and for its capacity to restrict, to establish protocols and doxa, to lay down, paradoxically, a kind of law for the open performances he sought to engender. This provisional assembly, whose exploded mode is perhaps even more complex than the subjunctivity of James's "seeking," gives us a glimpse, however fractally, of some of the implications of Oiticica's endeavor, which was, he

insists, neither conceptual nor utopian but cannot be understood apart from these terms.

What still remains are the proposals, never fully completed or outlined on paper, never fully conglomerated and, as such, never reaching the audiences Oiticica hoped would ultimately dispense with them. These proposals—insofar as they are meant to stand in (as if they were both confirming and denying their own irreducible objecthood; as if they were the unavoidably material representation of an immaterial absence) for the kinds of objects Oiticica fabricated earlier in his career, for the *Parangolé*, for example—seem in fact to suggest a kind of conceptualism or, at least, a parallel to conceptualism's purported "dematerialization" of the art object. But they remain precisely as the remains of proposals never carried out, and these remains take material form, constituting a form, in their highly wrought unfinishedness—in their desire for their own undoing by way of further performance and, at the same time, their failure to achieve it—a graphic performance that is also its own documentation.

The objects, the works or works of art, are, finally, not or not only the marked and remarked and sometimes coffee-stained pages of the work on paper. They are the performances they seek to initiate, ongoing social encounters to be formed, lived, and experienced in a leisurely way by whatever bodies they bring together, however they choose to join in. But they also register, in their remains, the means by which they are put on paper, the mode of production or forms of work or rather leisure/pleasure, the modes of sociality that were already at work or in "play" in the Nests. Though the fact that very few of these proposals were actually executed during Oiticica's lifetime suggests a kind of utopianism, what the proposals point toward, what they finally conjure, is not a u-topos but another world already at work within this world at work in the open underground or, as Oiticica preferred it, the "*subterrânea*" articulated by the Nests. *Subterrânea* is the name Oiticica gave to the "plan for a practice" he announced in his contribution to the catalogue for the *Information* exhibition at the Museum of Modern Art in New York that introduced him to New York and was the guiding principle for the "*subterranean* TROPICÁLIA PROJECTS" he pursued when he relocated there. But he had already begun to develop the idea of a *subterrânea* or subterranean situation in a series of notes composed in London and in Rio after returning from his stay in London, seeking and mapping its form across these notes and within them.

If, in *Tropicália*, Oiticica had tried to formulate an image of Brazil for the world, in the face of the repressive conditions that increasingly enveloped him there, he sought to ground his work instead in the underground, in-between space of *subterrânea*:

> My work is subterranean : because it is from within the world/from within to the world, exportable : . . . the foundation of a work is not the infinite production of objects—it is the formulation of a possibility of life: . . . to submerge? or to rise from the beneath toward *SUBTERRÂNEA*? . . . to overcome the repressive super paranoia: to make possible what is desirable, palpable the possible—that which is of interest: to produce new forms of communication: everything that was the object is only valuable as object of this; universal ambition: to construct the face-place. state of things: to abolish the hole/slump: to be here. to dream. . . . place: here. to the edge of the jungle. to the square of the civilized. to link things: to make the present: to live: to construct the future.[96]

He carries this idea of a *subterrânea* with him in his exile, announcing already in the catalogue for the MoMA show where he exhibited his Nests that *subterrânea* is his "plan for practice." This plan, which would "make the present" and, at the same time, "construct the future," is, as we have seen, a fundamentally open plan, one that can be expanded, that can "gr o o o ow."[97]

In that the works to be completed or outlined on paper generally, almost ritually, provide a detailed account of their own production, not only the date, time, duration, and location of their invention but the circumstances, the epistolary exchanges, phone calls, "extended raps," erotic encounters, shared highs, long-term friendships and other forms of contact out of which they emerged, they are historical documents that mark the forms of contact from which they emerged. What Oiticica gives us in these documents, in the mottled, informal form (a form Oiticica insists on preserving in any potential instance of their publication, often providing detailed notes to this effect),[98] what appears in all the arrows that mobilize text against itself, insertions that are never fully accepted in what they invade, chains of colons, dashes, and ellipses punctuating caesuras that never come to an end, or parentheses that only close by redoubling themselves, is a graphic diversity. This diversity is also phonographic, marked, in part, by the many

new terms, neologisms or portmanteaus,[99] that arise here by way of combination, hybridization, translation, and mistranslation and made manifest in the way they are to be read, which is to say the way they cannot be read from any simple linguistic site or statist or national linguistic formation. These terms, which will always carry and be disrupted by accent, given not only in the emphasis that Oiticica's frequent use of all caps, underlining, and double underlining imposes but in the various accents, the sounds of the noncitizens who speak and enact them, are undocumentable, produced by the undocumented denizens of *subterrânea*. They also point beyond themselves, offering a history in the subjunctive mode. In their radical form, their reformulation of form, and, moreover, in that they also anticipate their future reinvention by those who might one day undertake these experiments or, rather, reinventions, since, as with the *Parangolé*, every undertaking would necessarily produce new and different results, they constitute not so much documents but undocuments; they account for what has still yet to be lived, anticipate without fully charting social circumstances that have yet to emerge, that have not yet been experienced, let alone envisioned. The form of Oiticica's work, of the work that moves by way of but also against and through his dictation is the undocument.

In the preface to the "BLOCK EXPERIMENTS IN COSMOCOCA," Oiticica writes,

> it is not a question of preaching (or its contemporary equivalent "turning on" which should not be "to convert" someone into our own system of beliefs (as a mode of seeing-feeling-living)) it's more a question of mutual experimental incorporation through the play of simultaneous permeating experiences: as in . . . . . DANCING BODIES reeling and writhing never in one place long enough to form a "point of view."[100]

If we recall that a block refers, in Brazil, not only to a notebook but also to a configuration of dancing, reveling bodies at a carnival, then we might begin to understand this list of "indispensables" as the literary manifestation of—a choreography that both depicts and anticipates—such mutual experimental incorporation establishing "not a 'point of view' but a WORLD-INVENTION program"[101] that is a program in progress. Its elements, scattered, often only half proposed, not yet tested, and rarely stable enough to anchor anything even remotely like a "point of view," conjure, open onto one another, moving in and out of, within and around,

sometimes against, a general outline that would seem to serve as a kind of loose frame for the whole thing but that bursts open in every direction under the pressure of their energetic flows. Or perhaps it is more like the map that the Oiticica biographer Beatriz Scigliano Carneiro found among Oiticica's papers, addressed to one of Oiticica's friends from the favelas, a man named Bidu. It marked an escape route through Rio to a hiding space. Attached to the map was a note that read, "Bidu, don't show this map to anyone. Destroy it."[102] The list of indispensables outlines a secret escape route, a line of flight—a flight plan perhaps—to another world, one that will have been fully formed only when we realize that it is already here.

"Notes on American Civilization" and *Newyorkaises* are works that never became, or still have yet to become, the works they were meant to be. But what they were meant to be was never meant to be, was meant immediately to dissolve (its making vanished or violated), to be exceeded. James imagined this dissolution as a substitution in which, by way of a full-fountain-pen study, the book would give itself over to the "actual lives and opinions of the people so that the ideas which are expressed here in quotations by authorities will emerge in an entirely different form, will emerge as expressions of the lives and activities of the people concerned,"[103] and, finally, their efforts to reconstruct something like "the society in movement" that James attempted to represent in or as "a total picture." Oiticica imagined this dissolution as an augmentation in which each of the elements of the book, each of its proposals, would be exceeded in its "administration," in its performance, or performances, each one new and different, by whatever audiences it manages assemble.

James and Oiticica sought to create the conditions of possibility for new modes of sociality in and through a socialization of the intellectual function, a dialectical process that must materialize in and as a work even as it would immediately seek the unworking of that work by way of a counterclaim that James and Oiticica now actively courted (or cruised). But neither the "Notes on American Civilization" nor *Newyorkaises* ever got that far, at least not in James's or Oiticica's lifetimes. What results from this process, at least in these instances, is not a work in progress but an unwork in progress, a disruption of the work that itself remains suspended, its remains held in reserve, underground, in the organ/ization and the Nests. It may not have (yet) gathered the forces that it sought to assemble and that James

and Oiticica hoped would reconfigure it and carry it beyond the confines of its discrete habitations, but in its suspended state, it renders visible the new modes of sociality, organized around collaborative, experimental labor or leisure, that are already under way in the organ/ization and the Nests.

These books that are not books, works that are not works, are undocuments, products or effects of the undocumented exiles and the underground socialities in which they are enmeshed. They record and disturb the conditions of their own production, bearing .the traces of that production in the incoherence of their forms and in the desire for coherence that constitute those forms.

These traces are evident in the most fundamental elements, in the seriality of composite notes written and exchanged over the course of an entire day's work, that chart it sometimes hour by hour, as if the sociality that emerges in the desire for a new kind of sociality were a body, unstable and indiscrete, simultaneously in decline and gestation, awaiting death and birth, to be passed on and reproduced. These traces are held in notes that become letters, in letters that form chains, where the names of those who make up the ever-shifting membership-authorship-readership of Correspondence/ *Correspondence* become confused or irrelevant as they are omitted in the bylines of full-fountain-pen articles or merged (in missives addressed to the group as a whole or to its various subsets in headings such as "Dear 5") or constantly changed (as Lee notes, recalling that "in 1954 and 1955 [when] McCarthyism was at its height, . . . Raya . . . had us changing our names every few months to the point where we ourselves often could not identify who was who in our letters and minutes").[104] They are evident in notes that become to-do and to-contact lists filled with addresses and phone numbers and, at the same time, sites for notes from the encounters that frame, interrupt, and reshape them. This occurs quite literally in the cases of the "sketches for NEW NESTS SET," begun November 29, 1974, which record the plans for what will become *Hendrixsts*, Oiticica's second apartment, plans "decided with TIM*" ("TIM: who helped me with the installation-moving (oh! What a horrible burden)"),[105] in the middle of which appear the financial arrangements made with "TIM," a list of people to talk to and things to get from them, some shopping lists, and notes taken on an unexpected phone call from Waly Salomão regarding the translation of the poetry of Rimbaud. In these notes he recounts telling Salomão, "RIMBAUD: enjoyer/loafer-surfer of everything strange . . . translating (which is to say to write in English some

of the texts of it) that which I will publish in NEWYORKAISES will be something similar to that which happens when one penetrates another language : one lives in it : and everything is new : EXPERIMENTAL! : one discovers something more that is contiguous here."[106] It occurs, also, in the documentation for "CC6," in the various headings in which Oiticica notes the scene of its making (or "imaginvention"), including the dates, times, and presence of his collaborators, listed as "Thomas Valentin and all that jazz (WRVR FM radio 106.7 dialwise)," and including "SIGNificant EXTRAaneous elements" from the cityscape, such as "the COINCIDENCE of the S-i-R-e-N i-N t-H-e S-t-R-e-R-t," and suggestions made (by other visitors?) regarding how the title might be changed.[107] These traces are evident in collective translations and in deliberate "mistranslations" (in the form of poetic interlinguistic wordplay that manifests itself in compound words, puns, and neologisms in perpetual permutation) and also in what initially strikes us as errors, such as typographical inversions or inventions (often accompanied by corrections and apologies from James's otherwise-unacknowledged typists or addenda from Oiticica insisting on their preservation in future publications), among other forms of graphic excess in these undocuments whose paraliterary, subhistorical status is both augmented and undermined by the literary and visual shape of the documents and the sociality that shape encodes. All of these show the labor, the colabor or collaboration, involved in the ongoing composition, the ongoing transcription and transformation of these undocuments that materialized and enabled their dissemination within the organ/ization and Nests and beyond and the contact that dissemination entailed.

What these traces suggest is, in each case, not the "absence of the work," which would be, as Michel Foucault argues, "madness in its most general and concrete form,"[108] the madness whose severance and exclusion from reason is, for Foucault, the very foundation of reason or good sense. This is a madness *of* the work, the kind of "madness, fault or sickness" that future editors, with the best of intentions, try to clean up, edit, explain, or sequester. Works usually excise this madness, however much they are driven by and seek to exploit it; works cannot accommodate it, though its incorporative exclusion is what makes works as such possible. As Foucault argues,

> The great oeuvre of the history of the world is indelibly accompanied by the absence of an oeuvre, which renews itself at every instant, but which runs unaltered in its inevitable void the length of history: and

> from before history, as it is already there in the primitive decision, and after it again, as it will triumph in the last word uttered by history. The plenitude of history is only possible in the space, both empty and peopled at the same time, of all the words without language that appear to anyone who lends an ear, as a dull sound from beneath history, the obstinate murmur of a language talking to itself—without any speaking subject and without an interlocutor, wrapped up in itself, with a lump in its throat, collapsing before it ever reaches any formulation and returning without a fuss to the silence that it never shook off. The charred root of meaning.
>
> That is not yet madness, but the first caesura from which the divisions of madness became possible. That division is its repetition and intensification, its organization in the tight unity of the present; the perception that Western man has of his own time and space allows a structure of refusal to appear, on the basis of which a discourse is denounced as not being language, a gesture as not being an oeuvre, a figure as having no rightful place in history.[109]

Another name for this madness of the work which is an unruly and disruptive presence in and of the work that is necessarily excluded from and enclosed by the work and the history in which it figures is the aesthetic sociality of blackness. It is that which absorbs and carries forward what has been refused, refusing the structure of refusal, that which is excluded in and from the good sense that structures good citizenship and which these books claim and anticipate in the counterclaim, the radical rewriting that has not happened (yet) and that, at the same time, has structured them from the start.

The counterclaim is also a form of reproductivity. These undocuments are zones for that reproductivity. Their reproductivity is sexual, but it is neither compulsorily heterosexual nor even biological. It is sexual insofar as it begins with contact, the erotic dimension of which, foregrounded by Delany, did not, as I have noted, go unexplored in the organ/ization and the Nests.[110]

This is often muted in the posthumously published version of these works, or not-works—the "Notes on American Civilization" recovered and reedited into *American Civilization* by C. L. R. James or *Newyorkaises*

extracted and transcribed in various publications and exhibition catalogues. They are reworked and supplemented by prefaces, afterwords, and footnotes, reframed and historicized as relics of something past that have little place or force in this moment. If the forms in which they initially circulated bear evidence of the labor—in both senses of the word—through which they were produced, in the forms in which they were later published, evidence of this labor or colabor and the contributions of the key collaborators and interlocutors who partook in it, particularly women, is often deemphasized or forgotten.[111]

Nevertheless, this labor persists, continues to do its work of unworking, in the manuscripts, whose provisos, alterations, and pervasive, unclassifiable marks and marginalia signal the continuing paratextual emergence of the undocument. As the poet-critic Susan Howe has noted, such "birthmarks" are worthy of attention:

> In spite of the zealous searching of editors, authors, and publishers for the print-perfect proof of intellectual labor, the heart may be sheltering in some random mark of communication. Cancellations, variants, insertions, erasures, marginal notes, stray marks and blanks, . . . shorthand pen strokes, vertical dashes, abbreviations, and lists, . . . marginal marks . . . are another kind of writing, as are . . . word variants, directional dashes and crosses. Editors too often remove these original marks of "imperfection" or muffle them in appendixes and prefaces.[112]

Much is missed in the reformulation of a nonwork as work. Marginalia, in particular, are critical elements of the undocuments that emerge out of James's and Oiticica's association with others, which are themselves a form of marginalia insofar as they begin with and expand on many lengthy quotations from an incredibly wide range of sources, aesthetic and social, high and low.

Marginalia were, as a letter from James to Grace Lee dated October 18, 1953, suggests, part of the working method of Correspondence/ *Correspondence*:

> Now to save time I have torn out some pages of books, cheap paper covers, made some notes on them, and am sending them. As soon as you have absorbed them, send them on to Wm. You can send me your reactions and a copy to W. He can scribble on your copy and send to me.

If you wish to develop anything, you can do that later. All that I have to say is on them. . . .

P.S. All this should be filed in the end. *Make* [double underline] that W type carbons. We shall need them.[113]

Marginalia are what James specifically invited in the numbered copies of the "Notes on American Civilization" that initially circulated, even as he sought to restrict this circulation as much as possible. And these marginalia multiply, even now, in Lee's later insertion of her own marginalia, alongside James's, in the books they read together, in Dunayevskaya's revisionary reinscription of old letters between them, in Webb's commentary on the love letters that James wrote to her (he destroyed the ones she wrote to him), in the supplementary memoirs written by Lee and Constance Webb, and so on.[114]

And although the visually experimental documents—whose form Oiticica insisted on in any and every opportunity for publication and whose often discontinuous unfolding reads like nothing more than a series of insertions (perhaps this, finally, is what the block would propose)—appear to dispense with anything so definite as a "margin," Oiticica too specifically solicited transforming insertions, quite explicitly through devices such as the "Questionnaire in Progress" but even in the program in progress that the *BLOCK EXPERIMENTS IN COSMOCOCA* constitute, through the invitation he proposed to make to the de Campos brothers and the "suggestions" he offered Vergara (even though he initially produced a closed set of numbered copies with which he was loathe to part and fretted over who will own the rights to whatever Vergara produced).

"Marginal notes are not works," Howe insists. "Marks in the margins are immediate reflections. Reflection is also a coupling."[115] As a form of coupling or generative contact that is sexual (if not necessarily heterosexual or biological), marginalia instantiate the reproductivity of a text that is open to its audience through, as we have noted, a kind of reciprocal penetration in James's case—a form of sexual intercourse if we recall the archaic implications of the term "correspondence"[116]—or through a mutual experimental incorporation in Oiticica's case (which Oiticica initially experienced as a kind of "deflowering").[117] Indeed, at one point or another, James and Oiticica both tried to think the practices through which these undocuments were initially and provisionally generated in relation to something like maternity.

James was at the time contending with the difficulties of creating and raising an actual child and the resentment of his second wife, Constance Webb, over the way motherhood interrupted her own efforts to write (this was perhaps part of the urgency of the insistence within the "Notes on American Civilization" on the need to socialize maternity). He was unable, however, to imagine or attempt such a practice. Oiticica imagined himself in a queer version of the maternal role in a letter to Neville D'Almeida regarding the reproduction of the *BLOCK EXPERIMENTS IN COSMOCOCA*. Describing himself in the first place as a whore (invoking perhaps the whore of Babylon, mother of harlots and the abominations of the earth?), he tells D'Almeida, "to anyone who asks what are you doing or any other ingenious or harmless little questions, say that I made of Babylonests a kind of whorehouse of queers and that I have been fucked by a clientele that gets bigger and bigger every time."[118] He describes their collaborative "conception" of the *BLOCK EXPERIMENTS IN COSMOCOCA* as a sexualized encounter or "liaison." Mutual incorporation would not be a relation between two distinct and stable entities in which "there you are there come here" but rather an "impregnation" in which "as in the love that doesn't know who gives the something or how or when or why: to IN-CORPORATE in contiguity what when verified is already given." In this metaphoric account, it is Oiticica who is impregnated: "I feel like a pregnant person with sextuplets in the womb and who stops after the first but won't be content because the other still hasn't come. Only my sextuplets are sextuplets of sextuplets infinitely as much as my birthing energies can last."[119] But the space of these block experiments is an extension of the Nests, which are themselves manifestations of what Oiticica envisions as the *Barracão*, and Oiticica has understood the *Barracão* to be a site of queer reproduction from the start, imagining its development as a kind of mitosis, "where I, you, we, each one is the mother-cell."[120]

This reproductivity, this excessive, wayward, socialized, abnormative,[121] or queer maternity, shows up, then, in the way James and Oiticica tried to theorize their practices (even if they did not want them to be completely "theirs"). More importantly, however, it shows up in the work or rather the unworked working that congeals in the undocuments that emerged in and out of it. It is in marginalia and other stray, unclassifiable marks that the reproductivity of the motley crew, understood to have been barren, becomes apparent. You have to look for it. This reproductivity looks much

different than the reproduction of the citizenry "managed" by and for the state, accomplished through the regulation of biological reproduction (the "products" of which defined the "proletariat" and their contribution to the state in the first place)[122] and of other "nonproductive" forms of association or affiliation.

The offspring of the motley crew will be strange. They will be understood, as Howe notes, as "monstrous births."[123] They are warped, uncollectible documents, strange, incoherent, and indiscrete things, and new, unpredictable persons that form and inhabit the transmittable extensions of the unclassifiable spaces Correspondence/*Correspondence* and *Babylônests* and *Hendrixsts*. And these spaces are themselves offspring of the spaces where the motley crew regrouped and renewed itself, the spaces in which James and Oiticica first discovered the aesthetic sociality of blackness, which were themselves expressions of the aesthetic sociality of blackness, in the barrack yards and the favelas where provisional divisions and ever-new extensions disrupt the lines between the inorganic and organic. They created a new world within and underneath the space designated for the citizenry.

James and Oiticica participated in this reproductivity in spite of their own dictatorial tendencies. They did so by being open (even if they sometimes faltered) to what they otherwise disavowed and/or resisted: incursions or insertions by others. If we want to answer the question of what happened to the motley crew, we must look to the undocument, where that openness is enacted in all its disruptive and reproductive force. The fate of the motley crew, its futurity, lies there, in a kind of active waiting, as remains that can never be fully deanimated. It is here that we can register the ongoing "self-activation" or self-construction of the motley crew in and through the ongoing aesthetic sociality, always sexual, erotic, and reproductive, though, again, not necessarily heterosexual, of the nongenetic, more than organic, undocumented blackness that it has become.

What the undocuments offer is not an escape from the underground, as James and Oiticica might occasionally have hoped they would had they become books, but its extension and reproduction. It is, I would argue, ultimately the reproduction and extension of the alternative, marginal social formations that developed in and as Correspondence/*Correspondence* and *Babylônests* and *Hendrixsts* and, even more importantly, those that had been left behind in Trinidad and Brazil and the contact they made

possible, that James and Oiticica projected and anticipated in and through their undocuments. These undocuments sought and enacted new, alternate worlds operating within and against this world. The motley crew that Linebaugh and Rediker have begun to describe is not just a historical formation; it takes refuge in those worlds and persists as a force, however scattered, intermittent, and migratory (voluntarily or not) its manifestations may be. This is to say that the motley crew is a futurial formation. It is as much about what can happen as it is about what has already happened. And it is this futurity that the undocuments, constructed in relation to but extending well beyond whatever marginal spaces or undergrounds James and Oiticica could access and whatever forms of contact they made possible, tried to anticipate and open. They set the stage for their own extension and innovation in and through experiment, in the contact through which experiment is set to work.

James and Oiticica lived and worked outside the structures of citizenship and associated and aligned themselves with those who were excluded from citizenship, those whose exclusion defines citizenship, both in Trinidad and Brazil and again in the United States. They sought to create the conditions for the emergence of alternative, insurgent forms of collectivity. Drawing on and extending what they learned from the aesthetic sociality of blackness in their studies of cricket and samba and in the barrack yards of Port of Spain and the favelas of Rio de Janeiro, on the modes of congregation and collaboration they found there, James and Oiticica invented other kinds of structures, the organ/ization and the Nests, to fertilize and incubate new forms of life. In doing so, they approached something like what Hannah Arendt has argued, in *The Human Condition*, is a kind of indispensable natality, the new world within this world, the necessary new beginning, imagined in her account through the figure of the child:

> Love, by reason of its passion, destroys the in-between which relates us to and separates us from others. As long as its spell lasts, the only in-between which can insert itself between two lovers is the child, love's own product. The child, this in-between to which the lovers now are related and which they hold in common, is representative of the world in that it also separates them; it is an indication that they will insert a new world into the existing world. Through the child, it is as though the lovers return to the world from which their love had expelled them. But

> this new worldliness, the possible result and the only possibly happy ending of a love affair, is, in a sense, the end of love, which must either overcome the partners anew or be transformed into another mode of belonging together.[124]

For Arendt, this natality, the "world space" that "comes into being and inserts itself between," emerges as a necessary protection against the loss of separation and individuation that she sees in "the social" and, here, in the intimacy that love's passion effects. This new world and the public worldliness it reestablishes are the necessary basis for a politics structured around a citizenship rerooted in private property (in, she insists, the "original" sense in which not wealth but "one's location in a particular part of the world" or "one's piece of privately owned world" is the basis for belonging to a body politic).[125] This is the only mode of "belonging together" that she can condone as remedy for the crisis that expropriation and displacement creates. But for James and Oiticica and their collaborators, the long and ongoing history of expropriation and displacement necessitates other understandings of belonging. The new world or "world space" that emerges from contact (intimate or otherwise) becomes the basis for new, wayward modes of belonging together. This is the offspring (which, if we think reproduction as other than purely heterosexual and biological, as I am arguing James's and Oiticica's writing enables us to do, can be broadly construed); this is what materializes in and as the undocument, which itself becomes fecund ground.

Arendt, who had, as a displaced person, lived beyond the framework of citizenship only briefly and experienced, in the United States, a very different kind of exile, presumes that intimacy and the social are inherently dangerous and that individual lives have to be extracted and protected from them. The only real protection against such dangers would come from an exclusionary (necessarily exclusionary) nation-state[126]—even if and when that state is what makes new life so necessary. James and Oiticica attempted to create forms that answer neither to the state nor to the compulsory heterosexuality and exclusionary organicism on which the state depends. In declaring a kind of fugitive independence from the state that "protects" by excluding, the new world is given in a deviant and insurgent natality, born from the activity of sensual and reproductive organ/ization, from dissident tendencies, from correspondence, an intercourse that both carries

and transcends the traces of its archaic heterosexual implication, and born from the sensuous Nests, from placenta-like spaces that are not attached to any womb, from the mitosis initiated by the mother cell that "I, you, we, each of us" can be. It is the materialization of a radical undocumentability and experimentality that is, in all its unseemliness, always already under way in some underground, in exile from a citizenship it ultimately chooses to do without. To enter into and activate such a form or formation and to reproduce it, we have to approach these works or unworks yet again, along the lines that Howe has suggested in her own experimental criticism: "not to explain the work, not to translate it, but to meet the work with writing."[127]

And that is what I have attempted here, in this book: to meet James's and Oiticica's works or unworks with writing. In weaving these strange texts and their authors together throughout these chapters, I have put them in contact with one another. I have done so in order to begin to sketch the contours of a common experiment that, I believe, they, together, help make clear. I have done so in order to disrupt not just the individual authorship but the individuation that they both came to recognize as an obstacle to a radical reinvention of sociality but could not always bring themselves to abandon. I have also done so in an attempt to renew, by way of that contact—that erotic reciprocal penetration or mutual experimental incorporation and the abnormative reproductivity that it can potentially set off—the insurgent aesthetic, social, and intellectual experimentation that James and Oiticica endeavored to study, join, and extend. What I have written here might be understood as a reconfiguration of comparativism. It might also be understood as a further expansion of transatlantic and hemispheric American studies. It is both of those things. But it is, most importantly, a commitment to the ongoing reinvention of the kinds of creative and insurgent modes of congregation and collaboration that have been carried forward in the aesthetic sociality of blackness, in its performative practices and its experimental extension through contact-generating apparatuses, through undocuments, and through other underground forms, invented or not yet invented. Those who have sustained it have borne the burden of its criminalization, but perhaps that burden can also be shared if others come to see the necessity of the alternative it sustains.

But the production of *Experiments in Exile* has been enmeshed in my own history of ongoing relocation. The book developed in fits and starts,

existing for many years as the same kind of proliferating and scattered notes, epistles and drafts, perpetually lost and found, that James's and Oiticica's book projects did. Like James and Oiticica, I have continually deferred this book's completion, thinking I would have the time to follow up on all of the questions it opened. And like them, I had to finally reckon with the fact that I could not pursue it fully on my own. I leave it open, then, to future readers to take it up and recompose it as they see fit. The book's value, if it has one, will be in whatever comes from the work of those readers and the motley assemblages they arrange in the process.

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NOTES

Introduction

1. See Hortense J. Spillers, "Mama's Baby, Papa's Maybe: An American Grammar Book," in "Culture and Countermemory: The 'American' Connection," *Diacritics* 17, no. 2 (1987): 64–81; Cedric J. Robinson, *The Terms of Order: Political Science and the Myth of Leadership* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2016), and Erica R. Edwards's excellent foreword; Denise Ferreira da Silva, "Toward a Black Feminist Poethics," *Black Scholar* 44, no. 2 (2014): 81–97; and, for a fuller discussion of affectability, Silva, *Toward a Global Idea of Race* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2007). See also Fred Moten, "Blackness and Nothingness: Mysticism in the Flesh," *South Atlantic Quarterly* 112, no. 4 (2013): 778; and Moten's *Black and Blur* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2017).

2. Hortense Spillers, "Ellison's 'Usable Past': Toward a Theory of Myth," in *Black, White, and in Color: Essays on American Literature and Culture* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2003), 67.

3. Silva, "Toward a Black Feminist Poethics," 85–86.

4. The archive is filled with examples of British plans. Gilberto Freyre's vision was first articulated in his book *Casa-grande e senzala*, published in English as *The Masters and the Slaves: A Study in the Development of Brazilian Civilization*, trans. Samuel Putnam (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1986). Oswaldo de Andrade's ideas were articulated in his *Manifesto antropofágo*, which has been translated into English by Leslie Bary as "Cannibalist Manifesto," *Latin American Literary Review* 19, no. 38 (1991): 35–37. These projects have been chronicled and critiqued by many contemporary authors. See, for example, Bridget Brereton, *Race Relations in Colonial Trinidad, 1870–1900* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1979); Thomas E. Skidmore, *Black into White: Race and Nationality in Brazilian Thought* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2002); and Zita Nunes, *Cannibal Democracy: Race and Representation in the Literature of the Americas* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2008).

5. Consider, for example, Theodor W. Adorno's hatred of jazz or Hannah Arendt's displeasure with the civil rights movement.

6. I am borrowing the term "subjugated knowledge" from Michel Foucault. It appears in *"Society Must Be Defended": Lectures at the Collège de France, 1975–1976*, trans. David Macey (New York: Picador, 2003).

7. Such experiments constitute what Manolo Callahan sees in the Zapatista movement and what he seeks when he insists, in his own "convivial research," on the ongoing "renewal of our habits of assembly." See his discussion of this research practice in Manolo Callahan, "In Defense of Conviviality and the Collective Subject," *Polis: Revista Latinoamericana* 33 (2012): 1–27.

8. To eschew, here, does not mean to devalue. This intellectuality is anchored, as Brent Edwards suggests, in practices that forge connections, not in any territory. See Brent Edwards, *The Practice of Diaspora: Literature, Translation and the Practice of Diaspora* (Boston: Harvard University Press, 2003).

9. I am building on the term "critical citizenship," which Kathryne V. Lindberg used to describe the activities of the various generations of Detroit radicals with whom she worked closely before her untimely death. Lindberg had been collaborating with many of them, including Grace Lee Boggs and General Baker, among others, to document their historical activities and to imagine and develop new radical practices. Lindberg, in conversation with the author on many occasions.

10. Jacques Derrida, *Dissemination*, trans. Barbara Johnson (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1981).

11. *Hélio Oiticica*, curated by Guy Brett, Catherine David, Chris Dercon, Luciano Figueiredo, and Lygia Pape and exhibited internationally (in Paris at the Galerie de Nationale du Jeu de Paume, in Rotterdam at the Witte de With Center for Contemporary Art, and elsewhere), was the first major retrospective after Oiticica's death. Since then, Oiticica's works have been featured in a number of solo and group exhibitions. Most noteworthy in the United States have been the *Quasi-Cinemas* exhibition, featuring Oiticica's *Neyrótika*, *BLOCK EXPERIMENTS IN COSMOMCOCA*, and films, among other works; the *Tropicália: A Revolution in Brazilian Culture* exhibition, a historical multimedia exhibition of Brazilian art between 1967 and 1972 that included some of Oiticica's *Parangolé* and a reconstruction of his *Eden* installation, both curated by Carlos Basualdo; and *Hélio Oiticica: The Body of Color*, curated by Mari Carmen Ramírez, which enlarged the general understanding of Oiticica's oeuvre by featuring not only the *Parangolé* but the less-well-known early works that led up to it. Another book, *Oiticica in London*, produced in conjunction with the presentation of the *Hélio Oiticica: The Body of Color* exhibition at the Tate Gallery in London, specifically rendered Oiticica's social life in London by way of the recollections of those with whom he associated. Several museums are now combining forces to do that for an exhibition, *Hélio Oiticica: To Organize Delirium*, highlighting Oiticica's experiments in New York.

12. The scholarly work on James tends to be divided into one of two genres: left political historiography on the one hand and literary studies on the other. Kent

Worcester's *C. L. R. James: A Political Biography* (Albany: SUNY Press, 1996) and Paul Buhle's *C. L. R. James: The Artist as Revolutionary* (London: Verso, 1998) offer well-researched and informative accounts of James's oeuvre from the perspective of a left political history. Anthony Bogues offers an analysis of his political thinking in *Caliban's Freedom: The Early Political Thought of C. L. R. James* (London: Pluto, 1997), and the literary scholar Aldon Lynn Nielson (who took classes from James when James returned to the United States in the 1970s) also offers a well-researched account of the whole trajectory of James's oeuvre in his *C. L. R. James: A Critical Introduction* (Jackson: University Press of Mississippi, 1997), relating it less to the central texts of left political thought and more to the theoretical texts that have dominated recent literary studies. Other significant assessments of James's oeuvres from a literary perspective have come in the form of the collections such as *C. L. R. James's Caribbean*, edited by Paget Henry and Paul Buhle (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1992); *C. L. R. James: His Intellectual Legacies*, edited by Selwyn R. Cudjoe and William E. Cain (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 1995); and *Rethinking C. L. R. James*, edited by Grant Farred (Cambridge, UK: Blackwell, 1996). The critical works on Oiticica have appeared mostly in Brazil, in Portuguese, and have remained, for the most part, untranslated. Celso Favaretto produced one of the earliest and most important monographs on Oiticica, *A invenção de Hélio Oiticica* [The invention of Hélio Oiticica] (São Paulo: Editora da Universidade de São Paulo, 1992). Maria José Justino's *Seja marginal, seja herói: Modernidade e pós-modernidade em Hélio Oiticica* [Hélio Oiticica: to be marginal is to be a hero] (Curitiba, Brazil: Ed. da UFPR, 1998) and Beatriz Scigliano Carneiro's *Relâmpagos com claror: Lygia Clark e Hélio Oiticica, vida como arte* [Bright lightning bolts: Lygia Clark and Hélio Oiticica, life as art], on Oiticica (but also Lygia Clark) (São Paulo: Imaginário: FAPSEP, 2004), are very helpful, as are the more recent books *Hélio Oiticica: Singularidade, multiplicidade* [Hélio Oiticica: singularity, multiplicity] (São Paulo: Perspectiva, 2013), which focuses on Oiticica's writing and includes both Portuguese and English versions of text in the same volume, by Paula Braga (who also edited a collection of essays on Oiticica's work called *Fios soltos: A arte de Hélio Oiticica* [São Paulo: Perspectiva, 2011]), and *Hélio Oiticica: Folding the Frame*, by Irene V. Small (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2016), which focuses on Oiticica's early work. Some have tried to broaden these perspectives by writing about the collaborative nature of James's and Oiticica's oeuvres. Some of James's own collaborators have done so by writing autobiographical accounts of their own, but those are illuminating and render more fully, whether directly or indirectly, the scenes and desires in and through which these oeuvres, or specific works within them, were produced. Some of these are affectionate portraits; others are not. Because of all the conflicts and splits within the organization that James helped form, some of the supplementary texts on James are quite critical. For example, in the memoir *Living for Change:*

An Autobiography (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1998), Grace Lee Boggs offers a revised account of the production process through which James worked, deemphasizing his role by way of her criticism of it and bringing into focus the roles played by others. James's second wife, Constance Webb, undertakes a similar revision in her memoirs, *Not without Love* (Hanover, NH: Dartmouth College Press / University Press of New England, 2003), but one that is less focused on the theoretical premises and more pointed in the direction of the social relations within and out of which the texts attributed to James emerged. Raya Dunayevskaya and Selma James, who have gone on to write their own books, have each written shorter accounts of their collaborations with James. A number of the Brazilian writers with whom Oiticica associated and/or collaborated have recounted their experiences working with him in interviews or shorter essays that are difficult to access in the United States. The poet Waly Salomão's *Qual é o Parangolé?* [What is the Parangolé?] (Rio de Janeiro: Relume Dumará, 1996) offers an intimate portrait of Oiticica's oeuvre in book form. Ivan Cardoso made a wonderful film about Oiticica but clearly also with Oiticica and therefore performing a kind of collaboration with him, called *HO*. Andreas and Thomas Valentin, friends who collaborated with Oiticica while he lived in New York, produced a website that features the documents across which one of their collaborations, a project called *Call Me Helium*, unfolded. Several scholars have also tracked these collaborations. Most useful, for my study, was Paola Berenstein Jacques's *Estética da ginga: A arquitetura das favelas através da obra de Hélio Oiticica* [The aesthetics of ginga: the architecture of the favelas through the work of Hélio Oiticica] (Rio de Janeiro: Casa da Palavra, 2001), which examines Oiticica's relation to and writing about samba and the Mangueira favela in detail. More recently, Frederico Coelho has written about some of the exchanges in which Oiticica participated while living in Brazil, in *Eu, brasileiro, confesso minha culpa e meu pecado* [I, a Brazilian, confess my guilt and my sin] (Rio de Janeiro: Civilização Brasileira, 2009), and in New York in the context of his beautiful study of Oiticica's writing *Livro ou livro-me: Os escritos babilônicos de Hélio Oiticica (1971–1978)* [Book or book-me / I liberate or I liberate myself: The Babylonian writings of Hélio Oiticica] (Rio de Janeiro: Editora da Universidade do Estado do Rio de Janeiro, 2010).

13. Cedric J. Robinson, *Black Marxism: The Making of the Black Radical Tradition* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2005), xxxii.

1. What Happened to the Motley Crew?

1. Peter Linebaugh and Marcus Rediker, *The Many-Headed Hydra: Sailors, Slaves, Commoners, and the Hidden History of the Revolutionary Atlantic* (Boston: Beacon, 2000), 332–33. Though Linebaugh and Rediker note that "the very term proletarian originally referred to poor women who served the state by bearing

children" (332), they do not really fully pursue questions of gender and sexuality, as Judith Halberstam has already noted in *The Queer Art of Failure* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2011). Nor do they explore questions of reproduction. See Alys Eve Weinbaum's discussion of the relation between reproduction and race and the notion of "wayward reproductions" in her book *Wayward Reproductions: Genealogies of Race and Nation in Transatlantic Modern Thought* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2004).

2. Linebaugh and Rediker, *Many-Headed Hydra*, 332–33.

3. Ibid., 213.

4. Ibid., 213–14.

5. Ibid., 328.

6. Ibid., 352.

7. See James's semiautobiographical account of cricket in the West Indies, *Beyond a Boundary* (1963, repr., Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1993), 8.

8. Ibid., 3–6.

9. Ibid., 40, 18.

10. See Paul Buhle's more expansive account of these literary endeavors in *C. L. R. James: The Artist as Revolutionary* (London: Verso, 1988), 26–28; or Kent Worcester's *C. L. R. James: A Political Biography* (Albany: SUNY Press, 1996), 14–18. Harvey Neptune also covers some of the larger political debates that played out in such journals in this period in his book *Caliban and the Yankees: Trinidad and the United States Occupation* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2007).

11. This pamphlet was recently republished in *The Life of Captain Cipriani: An Account of British Government in the West Indies, with the Pamphlet "The Case for West-Indian Self Government"* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2014).

12. James produced an earlier account of this history in dramatic form in a play that was just rediscovered and published as *Toussaint Louverture: The Story of the Only Successful Slave Revolt in History: A Play in Three Acts*, ed. Christian Høgsbjerg (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2012). For more on James's treatment of the Haitian Revolution in this play and elsewhere, see my essay "Hero as Instrument," *sx salon* 16 (May 2014), http://smallaxe.net/sxsalon/discussions/hero-instrument.

13. Hélio Oiticica, "Dance in My Experience (Diary Entries)," trans. Michael Asbury, in *Participation*, ed. Claire Bishop (London: Whitechapel; Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2006), 105.

14. For more information about Oiticica's grandfather, see Beatriz Scigliano Carneiro's very detailed biographical sketch of the Oiticica family in *Relâmpagos com claror: Lygia Clark e Hélio Oiticica, vida como arte* [Bright lightning bolts: Lygia Clark and Hélio Oiticica, life as art] (São Paulo: Imaginário: FAPSEP, 2004).

15. Hélio Oiticica, Notes, 16 February 1961–24 April 1961, 0182/61 (TS in Portuguese), Projeto Hélio Oiticica, Rio de Janeiro, and Itaú Cultural: Programa Hélio

Oiticica, http://www.itaucultural.org.br/programaho/; reprinted in *Aspiro ao grande labarinto* [I aspire to a great labyrinth], ed. Luciano Figueiredo, Lygia Pape, and Waly Salomão (Rio de Janeiro: Rocco, 1986), 26–28 (my translation).

16. This was before the favelas had become major hubs for international drug traffickers, which transformed the social life of the favelas in 1979.

17. Just as the barracks housing in the barrack yards recalls the slave barracks, the term *Barracão* recalls the *barracos* or shacks typically found in the favelas (as well as the *barracão* where *condomblé* festivals are held). It also recalls (as do the barracks) the barracoons, pens where slaves were held, along with other sellable goods, during the slave trade. Hence, when Oiticica calls the community he envisions *Barracão*, he invokes the space of the most brutal conditioning of behavior as the resource for its unconditioning. I further address this topic later in the book.

18. See the introduction to Williams's *Keywords: A Vocabulary of Culture and Society*, rev. ed. (London: Fontana; New York: Oxford University Press, 1983), 13, in which he describes the thinking that moved him to write the book: "I began exploring the word [*culture*] in my adult classes. The words I linked it with, because of the problems its uses raised in my mind were *class*, *art*, and then *industry* and *democracy*. I could feel these five words as a kind of structure."

19. Linebaugh and Rediker, *Many-Headed Hydra*, 6.

20. Ibid.

21. James himself points to such efforts by the British in his early barrack-yard fiction. In "Triumph," the story that had aroused such a tremendous reaction, the narrator remarks, "No longer do the barrack-yarders live the picturesque life of twenty-five years ago," a life organized around lively assemblies of rival singers, stick fighters, pierrots, and their audiences associated with the Carnival and the ongoing preparations for it: "Today that life is dead. The policeman is to the stick-fighter and 'pierrot' as the sanitary inspector is to mosquito larvae. At nights when the streets are bright with electric light, the art of the law is larger, its grip stronger. Gone are the old lawlessness and picturesqueness. Barrack-yard life has lost its savour. Luckily, prohibition in Trinidad is still but a word. And life, dull and drab as it is in comparison, can still offer its great moments." C. L. R. James, "Triumph," in *The C. L. R. James Reader*, ed. Anna Grimshaw (Oxford, UK: Blackwell, 1992), 30.

In *Minty Alley*, moreover, the household dissolves under pressure. Mrs. Rouse, who struggled to pay off a mortgage that had been written to the benefit of her lender (not unlike the type of mortgage that had forced Haynes to rent out his own home and take a room at No. 2 Minty Alley in the first place), finally gives up the fight and sells off the property. Its new occupants, a husband, a wife, and three children, remake the house into a proper middle-class home.

In Brazil, samba and other forms of black cultural expression, outlawed in colonial times, are subject to continuous harassment and restriction. And the favelas are periodically destroyed. As Beatriz Scigliano Carneiro has noted, the killing of

Cara de Cavalo, whom Oiticica had memorialized in earlier works, coincided with the announcement by the state that it would be removing the last vestiges of the favela in which he lived, part of a larger campaign that continued throughout the dictatorship. When Oiticica returned from exile, he envisioned a work, "*A ronda da morte* [the rhythm of death]" to mark the very brutal murders by police death squads of so many of his friends and lovers from the favelas, a meditation on the relation he had come to understand between dance and what he valorized in it and their violent deaths:

[arrow down]
This glimpse/glimmer came to me today Sunday and I dedicate it to all my dead friends-lovers (I am thinking about CELSO RIBEIRO DOS SANTOS—dead [illegible] and whom I adored—I am thinking of PAULINHO dead [illegible] in MANGUEIRA—I am thinking of JERÔNIMO dead years ago in 69 when I was in LONDON [arrow] this work would be a MEDITATION ON DEATH AND DANCE
[arrow down]
THE BEAT/RHYTHM :
[arrow down]
SIMULTANEITY
[arrow down]
TEMPO-DANCE
DEATH BOUND
TO THIS TEMPO-DANCE AS PART
OF IT
[large exclamation point]

See Hélio Oiticica to Martine Barrat (with proposal for "A ronda da morte" [The rhythm of death]), 23 May 1979, 0085/79 (TS in English with MS in Portuguese), Projeto Hélio Oiticica and Itaú Cultural: Programa Hélio Oiticica.

22. Blackness in the Americas has always entailed unlikely combination, as Michael A. Gomez has already noted in tracking the very formation of the category in the United States. The people who came to identify themselves as black were composed of people from very different ethnic origins brought together through the transatlantic slave trade. See Michael A. Gomez, *Exchanging Our Country Marks: The Transformation of African Identities in the Colonial and Antebellum South* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1998).

23. James Baldwin, "The Devil Finds Work," in *The Price of the Ticket: Collected Nonfiction, 1948–1985* (New York: St. Martin's / Marek, 1985), 630–31.

24. Such a re-membering could only, as Saidiya V. Hartman suggests, be oriented toward marking the impossibility of redress. Saidiya V. Hartman, *Scenes of Subjection: Terror, Slavery and Self-Making in Nineteenth Century America* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997), 76–77.

25. James uses this phrase to describe the kind of play embodied by the Shannon club. James, *Beyond a Boundary*, 57.

26. Hélio Oiticica interviewed by Mário Barata, "Hélio Oiticica: A vanguarda deve jogar fora o estetecismo" [The vanguard rejects aestheticism], *Jornal do Commercio*, 16 July 1967, quoted in Paola Berenstein Jacques, *Estética da ginga: A arquitetura das favelas através da obra de Hélio Oiticica* [The aesthetics of ginga: The architecture of the favelas through the work of Hélio Oiticica] (Rio de Janeiro: Casa da Palavra, 2001), 32 (my translation).

27. Linebaugh and Rediker, *Many-Headed Hydra*, 208.

28. Ibid., 333. Linebaugh explores this idea more fully in an essay of his own, "All the Atlantic Mountains Shook," in *Labour / Le Travail* 10 (1982): 87–121.

29. James, *Beyond a Boundary*, 64.

30. Hélio Oiticica, "Dance in My Experience (Diary Entries)," trans. Michael Asbury, in *Participation*, ed. Claire Bishop (London: Whitechapel; Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2006), 105.

31. See Denise Ferreira da Silva's "No-Bodies: Law, Raciality and Violence," *Griffith Law Review* 8, no 2 (2009): 212–36.

32. Oiticica, "Dance in My Experience," 105.

33. James, *Beyond a Boundary*, 198.

34. Oiticica, "Dance in My Experience," 105–6.

35. James, *Beyond a Boundary*, 206.

36. Ibid., 205.

37. Oiticica, "Dance in My Experience," 105.

38. Ibid.

39. James, *Beyond a Boundary*, 87.

40. Ibid., 105.

41. Oiticica, "Dance in My Experience," 105.

42. Ibid., 107.

43. James, *Beyond a Boundary*, 57.

44. Ibid., 88.

45. Oiticica interviewed by Mário Barata, "A vanguarda," quoted in Jacques, *Estética da ginga*, 32 (my translation).

46. Oiticica, "Dance in My Experience," 105.

47. For James, "the end of democracy is a more complete existence." Cricket, like the drama of ancient Greece, offers a representation of that to its viewers: "The popular democracy of Greece, sitting for days in the sun watching *The Oresteia*; the popular democracy of our day, sitting similarly watching Miller or Lindwall bowl to Hutton and Compton—each in its own way grasps at a more complete human existence." James, *Beyond a Boundary*, 210–11.

48. Ibid., 55.

49. Ibid.

50. Ibid., 73.

51. Ibid., 80.

52. Oiticica, "Dance in My Experience," 106.

53. Hélio Oiticica, "Notas" [Notes], 11–12 June 1973, 0316/73 (MS in Portuguese), Projeto Hélio Oiticica and Itaú Cultural: Programa Hélio Oiticica, 6. These notes appear in a seventy-three-page notebook that contains many other documents cited in this book.

54. Saidiya V. Hartman, *Lose Your Mother: A Journey along the Atlantic Slave Route* (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2007). Donald R. Hill has noted the resonances between these kinds of spaces and the slave quarters in his descriptions of the barrack yards. Barbara Browning has made similar observations regarding the favela. See Donald R. Hill, *Calypso Calaloo: Early Carnival Music in Trinidad* (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 1993); and Barbara Browning, *Samba: Resistance in Motion* (Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1995).

55. Robert K. Home, *Of Planting and Planning: The Making of British Colonial Cities*, 2nd ed. (London: Routledge, 2013), 99.

56. Adrelino Campos, *Do quilombo à favela: A produção do "espaço criminalizado" no Rio de Janeiro* [From the quilombo to the favela: the production of "criminalized space" in Rio de Janeiro] (Rio de Janeiro: Bertrand Brasil, 2005).

57. For more on the construction of the barrack ranges, see Home, *Of Planting and Planning*. For more on the construction of the *barracos*, see Solène Veysseyre, "Case Study: The Unspoken Rules of Favela Construction," trans. Vanessa Quirk, *ArchDaily*, 3 August 2014, http://www.archdaily.com/531253/case-study-the-unspoken-rules-of-favela-construction.

58. Hill, *Calypso Calaloo*, 33–34.

59. As Hill notes, calypso emerged out of what he calls the "jamet" or underclass carnival—the term "jamet" comes from the French word for diameter, *diamêtre*, and means "peripheral" or "marginal"—that had its roots in the canboulay or cane-burning festival that was later grafted onto the opening of Carnival. Calinda, a form of stick fighting practiced by the slaves, was part of this festival. As Hill notes, "From the eighteenth century on, estates rivaled each other in stick fighting. This idea of territoriality was taken into the towns after emancipation. . . . A yard served as the home for a band of stick fighters." Ibid., 27–28. See also Richard D. E. Burton, *Afro-Creole: Power, Opposition and Play in the Caribbean* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1997); and Jocelyne Guilbaut, *Governing Sound: The Cultural Politics of Trinidad's Carnival Musics* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2007).

60. Stuart Hall, "A Conversation with C. L. R. James," in *Rethinking C. L. R. James*, ed. Grant Farred (Cambridge, UK: Blackwell, 1996), 19.

61. Buhle, *C. L. R. James*, 33.

62. Jacques, *Estética da ginga*, 105.

63. Ibid., 67.

64. See, for example, the two boxes in the *Bólide* [Fireball] series that bear his name: *B 33 Bólide caixa 18 "Homenagem a Cara de Cavalo"* [Homage to Cara de Cavalo], 1965–66, which includes copies of a newspaper photograph of Manoel Moreira (whose nickname was Cara de Cavalo, or Horse Face), taken after his murder by the police; and *B56 Bólide-caixa 24 "Caracara de Cara de Cavalo"* [Beloved face of Cara de Cavalo], 1968, which contains a life-sized image of his face, from a photo taken while he was still alive.

65. Michael Asbury has noted that he was certainly not on friendly terms with all residents: "The late poet Waly Salomão recalled, for instance, a number of incidents that occurred during some of Hélio's visits to Mangueira. Although Salomão did not clarify the motives—whether they were robberies, drug or sex related—these incidences involved inhabitants of the favela being violent toward the artist. Indeed, the very fact that the favela is a *barra pesada* [dangerous] place, was one of the reasons Hélio was attracted to it." Michael Asbury, "Hélio Couldn't Dance," in "Seguindo fios soltos: Caminhos na pesquisa sobre Hélio Oiticica," ed. Paula Braga, special issue, *Fórum Permanente*, 2006, http://www.forumpermanente.org/en/journal/following-loosen-threads-scanning-helio-oiticica-today/helio-couldn2019t-dance.

66. In this respect, James and Oiticica diverge from the embrace of the figure of the worker as subject of history and the new modern West Indian states that Sylvia Wynter and more recently Shona Jackson have critiqued. See Sylvia Wynter, "Beyond the Categories of the Master Conception: The Counterdoctrine of the Jamesian Poiesis," in *C. L. R. James's Caribbean*, ed. Paget Henry and Paul Buhle (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1992), 63–91; and Shona N. Jackson, *Creole Indigeneity: Between Myth and Nation in the Caribbean* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2012).

67. See Hall, "Conversation," 18, where James recalls, "One vacation I wrote this novel and put the novel there. That was a novel for me; I wrote a chapter a day. And the chapters are brief. That was merely to exercise myself; I didn't write it for publication. It got published by accident when I came to England."

68. Hélio Oiticica, "Fundamental Bases for the Definition of the Parangolé" (translation of "Bases fundamentais para uma definição do Parangolé," November 1964, published by the artist in 1965, in a pamphlet for the exhibition *Opinão 65*, 12 August–12 September 1965, Museu de Arte Moderna, Rio de Janeiro), in *Hélio Oiticica*, ed. Guy Brett, Catherine David, Chris Dercon, Luciano Figueiredo, and Lygia Pape, trans. Stephen Berg et al. (Paris: Galerie de nationale du Jeu de Paume; Rio de Janeiro: Projeto Hélio Oiticica; Rotterdam: Witte de With Center for Contemporary Art, 2000), 85.

69. See Mário Pedrosa, "On Antonio Manuel's Presentation at the Opening of the Salão Nacional de Arte Moderna, as a Work of Art" (1970), in *Primary*

Documents, ed. Gloria Ferreira and Paulo Herkenhoff, trans. Stephen Berg (New York: Museum of Modern Art, 2015), 326. As the editors note, Pedrosa first used this phrase in 1970 in a conversation with Antonio Manuel, Alex Varela, and Hugo Denizart shortly after Manuel's performance of *O corpo é a obra* (The body is the work), in which he presented his own nude body as a work of art at Rio de Janeiro's Museu de Arte Moderna. The conversation was transcribed and edited by the artist Lygia Pape and then published, along with materials by Manuel, in the *Tema* supplement of *O jornal* on 15 July 1973. Ibid., 327n1.

70. See Silvia Wynter's discussion of this dimension of the novel, revealed in Philomen's admission that the women who work at No. 2 go hungry in order to ensure that Haynes is fed, in "Beyond the Categories of the Master Conception," 79–80.

71. Anna Grimshaw, "Introduction: C. L. R. James: A Revolutionary Vision for the Twentieth Century" in *The C. L. R. James Reader*, ed. Anna Grimshaw (Oxford, UK: Blackwell, 1992), 3.

72. Buhle, *C. L. R. James*, 33. James recounts the episode in a 1944 letter to Constance Webb. See C. L. R. James, *Special Delivery: The Letters of C. L. R. James to Constance Webb, 1939–1948*, ed. Anna Grimshaw (Oxford, UK: Blackwell, 1996), 154–55.

73. *Manifestação ambiental No. 1* (Environmental manifestation) was the title Oiticica chose for his first solo show in 1966 at the Galeria G4 in Rio de Janeiro. In the text "Position and Program," written in July 1966, Oiticica notes, "For me, the most complete expression of this entire concept of 'environmentation' was the formulation of the what I called Parangolé." See Hélio Oiticica, "Position and Program," July 1966, in Brett et al., *Hélio Oiticica*, 103.

74. Hélio Oiticica, "Notes on the Parangolé," November 1964 (published by the artist in 1965, in a pamphlet for the exhibition *Opinão 65*, 12 August–12 September 1965, Museu de Arte Moderna, Rio de Janeiro), in Brett et al., *Hélio Oiticica*, 93–96.

75. Oiticica, "Fundamental Bases for the Definition of the Parangolé."

76. Bobby J. Chamberlain and Ronald M. Harmon, *A Dictionary of Informal Brazilian Portuguese* (Washington, DC: Georgetown University Press, 1983), 378. Oiticica's translators offer varying interpretations. Stephen A. Berg and Héctor Olea offer the most detailed account: "The origin of the word Parangolé is obscure, and its earliest appearance may be traced back to c. 1950 in Rio de Janeiro, where it was variously used to qualify nonsensical, uninteresting, or pointless conversation. More to the point, Oiticica was probably aware of its additional senses of artfulness or astuteness, as used to designate the cunning and street smarts generally associated with the Carioca figure of the dandy-like *malandro*, typified by his individualist ethos, existing at the margins of society and surviving by his wits through improvised activities such as grift, petty theft, and pimping. As such, by the late 1960s this somewhat romantic character had long since become a quasi-caricatural

urban myth. *Parangolé* also signifies dishonest behavior intended to deceive." See the "Translator's Note" in Hélio Oiticica, "Cornerstones for a Definition of 'Parangolé'" (translation of "Bases fundamentais para uma definição do Parangolé"), in *Hélio Oiticica: The Body of Color*, ed. Luciano Figueiredo and Mari Carmen Ramírez, trans. Stephen A. Berg and Héctor Olea (London: Tate; Houston: Museum of Fine Arts, 2007), 297.

77. This was written by Oiticica as an addendum to one of the two texts he circulated at the inauguration of the Parangolé at *Opinão 65* exhibition at the Museum of Modern Art in Rio de Janeiro in 1965, "Fundamental Bases for the Definition of the Parangolé," in which he says, "see elsewhere the theory of the name, and how I found it." See 0187/65, Projeto Hélio Oiticica and Itaú Cultural: Programa Hélio Oiticica.

78. Ibid., 88.

79. Though, as Kenneth Ramchand has noted, outraged middle-class audiences did perhaps seek to discourage James, he was not responsive to their criticism. Ramchand, introduction to *Minty Alley*, by C. L. R. James, 5–15 (Jackson: University Press of Mississippi, 1997).

80. See James, *Beyond a Boundary*, 89–91.

81. Haynes's own middle-class standing is revealed as having always been somewhat precarious. Recalled in the narrative is his mother's remark, "You are black, my boy. I want you to be independent and in these little islands for a black man to be independent means that he must have money or a profession. I know how your father suffered, and you are so much like him that I tremble for you." See C. L. R. James, *Minty Alley* (1936; repr., Jackson: University Press of Mississippi, 1997), 22. Subsequent citations of this source refer to this edition and appear parenthetically in the text.

82. C. L. R. James, Autobiography 1932–38, Box 4, Folder 7, C. L. R. James Papers, 1933–2001, Rare Book and Manuscript Library, Columbia University, New York, 29.

83. Hélio Oiticica, "Position and Program," July 1966, in *Hélio Oiticica: The Great Labyrinth*, ed. Susanne Gaensheimer, Peter Gorschlüter, Max Jorge Hinderer Cruz, and César Oiticica Filho (Berlin: Hatje Cantze, 2014), 171.

84. Ibid., 173.

85. Hélio Oiticica, "Notes on the Parangolé," November 1964 (published by the artist in 1965, in a pamphlet for the exhibition *Opinão 65*, 12 August–12 September 1965, Museu de Arte Moderna, Rio de Janeiro), in Brett et al., *Hélio Oiticica*, 93.

86. Hélio Oiticica, "Position and Program," in Gaensheimer et al., *Hélio Oiticica*, 175. This passage appears in the final section, titled "Ethical Position," which was not included in the version printed in the Witte de With exhibition catalogue.

87. Ibid., 175–76.

88. Hélio Oiticica, "Perguntas e respostas para Mário Barata" [Questions and answers for Mário Barata], 15 May 1967, 0320/67 (TS in Portuguese), Projeto Hélio Oiticica and Itaú Cultural: Programa Hélio Oiticica, 4–5 (my translation).

89. Oiticica interviewed by Mário Barata, "A vanguarda," quoted in Jacques, *Estética da ginga*, 32 (my translation).

90. James, *Beyond a Boundary*, 121.

91. Hélio Oiticica, "Barracão" [Shack], 19 August 1969, 0440/69 (MS in Portuguese) or 0452/69 (TS in Portuguese), Projeto Hélio Oiticica and Itaú Cultural: Programa Hélio Oiticica (my translation).

92. Ramchand, introduction to James, *Minty Alley*, 9.

93. Grupo da Educação Moral e Cívica, "The Maximum Norm of the Exercise of Liberty" (1973), in *The Brazil Reader: History, Culture, Politics*, ed. and trans. Robert M. Levine and John J. Crocitti (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1999), 258–59.

2. Dialectic of Contact

1. C. L. R. James, Autobiography 1932–38, Box 4, Folder 7, C. L. R. James Papers, 1933–2001, Rare Book and Manuscript Library, Columbia University, New York, 29.

2. Hélio Oiticica, "Fundamental Bases for the Definition of the Parangolé" (translation of "Bases fundamentais para uma definição do Parangolé," November 1964, published by the artist in 1965, in a pamphlet for the exhibition *Opinão 65*, 12 August–12 September 1965, Museu de Arte Moderna, Rio de Janeiro), in *Hélio Oiticica*, ed. Guy Brett, Catherine David, Chris Dercon, Luciano Figueiredo, and Lygia Pape, trans. Stephen Berg et al. (Paris: Galerie de nationale du Jeu de Paume; Rio de Janeiro: Projeto Hélio Oiticica; Rotterdam: Witte de With Center for Contemporary Art, 2000), 85.

3. Mary Louise Pratt, "Arts of the Contact Zone," in *Profession 91*, ed. Phyllis Franklin and Reece Franklin (New York: MLA, 1991), 35.

4. Samuel R. Delany, *Times Square Red, Times Square Blue* (New York: NYU Press, 1999), 123. Subsequent citations of this source refer to this edition and appear parenthetically in the text.

5. Mary Louise Pratt, *Imperial Eyes: Travel Writing and Transculturation*, 2nd ed. (New York: Routledge, 2008), 7–8.

6. Ibid., 8.

7. Mary Louise Pratt, "Arts of the Contact Zone," 35.

8. Ibid.

9. Ibid.

10. I am referring to the kinds of connections Lisa Lowe imagines in "Intimacies of Four Continents," in *Haunted by Empire: Geographies of Intimacy in North American History*, ed. Ann Laura Stoler (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2006).

11. Delany, *Times Square Red*, 179.

12. C. L. R. James, *Mariners, Renegades, and Castaways: The Story of Herman Melville and the World We Live In* (1953; repr., Hanover, NH: University Press of New England, 1978), 159.

13. Hélio Oiticica to Lygia Clark, 15 May 1971, in *Lygia Clark–Hélio Oiticica: Cartas [Letters] (1964–1974)*, ed. Luciano Figueiredo (Rio de Janeiro: Universidade Federal do Rio de Janeiro, 1996), 200–201 (my translation).

14. C. L. R. James, *American Civilization*, ed. Anna Grimshaw and Keith Hart (Cambridge, UK: Blackwell, 1993), 122. Subsequent citations of this source refer to this edition and appear parenthetically in the text.

15. Hélio Oiticica, "LEORK," 22 July 1972–27 July 1972, 0212/72 (TS in Portuguese and English), Projeto Hélio Oiticica, Rio de Janeiro, and Itaú Cultural: Programa Hélio Oiticica, http://www.itaucultural.org.br/programaho/, 5 (my translation). In earlier drafts, Oiticica indicated that this piece (whose alternate titles were "LEO YORK" and "LEO N.Y.") was composed for publication in Rio in "Vergara's Journal," possibly the journal *Malasartes*.

16. Hélio Oiticica, "PARA AUGUSTO DE CAMPOS" [For Augusto de Campos], March 1974, 0505/74 (transcript of tape-recording in Portuguese), Projeto Hélio Oiticica and Itaú Cultural: Programa Hélio Oiticica, 1 (my translation).

17. Ibid., 2.

18. Oiticica, "LEORK," 4.

19. Ibid.

20. Oiticica, "PARA AUGUSTO DE CAMPOS," 2.

21. Ibid., 4–5.

22. Ibid., 5.

23. Ibid.

24. Hélio Oiticica, "PARANGOLÉ-SÍNTESE" [Parangolé-synthesis], 26 July 1972–26 December 1972, 0201/72 (TS in Portuguese), Projeto Hélio Oiticica and Itaú Cultural: Programa Hélio Oiticica, 3 (my translation).

25. Ibid., 3.

26. Oiticica, "PARA AUGUSTO DE CAMPOS," 2.

27. C. L. R. James, Autobiography 1938–53, TS, Box 4, Folder 16, part a, C. L. R. James Papers, 1933–2001, Rare Book and Manuscript Library, Columbia University, New York, 26.

28. C. L. R. James, "Down with Starvation Wages in South-East Missouri" (1942), in *The Future in the Present: Selected Writings* (Westport, CT: Hill, 1977), 89–94.

29. A number of people have begun writing about Oiticica's interactions with Smith and Montez. See, for example, Max Jorge Hinderer Cruz, "TROPICAMP: PRE- AND POST-TROPICÁLIA at Once: Some Contextual Notes on Hélio Oiticica's 1971 Text," *Afterall: A Journal of Art, Context and Enquiry* 28 (Autumn–Winter 2011): 4–15.

30. Hélio Oiticica, "New York Bi 76," n.d., 0172/76 (TS in Portuguese), Projeto Hélio Oiticica and Itaú Cultural: Programa Hélio Oiticica, 1 (my translation).

31. Ibid.

32. Ibid.

33. See C. L. R. James "Dialectical Materialism and the Fate of Humanity" (1947), in *The C. L. R. James Reader*, ed. Anna Grimshaw (Oxford, UK: Blackwell, 1992), 153–81.

34. Paul Buhle, *C. L. R. James: The Artist as Revolutionary* (London: Verso, 1988), 83; Scott McLemee, "American Civilization and World Revolution: C. L. R. James in the United States: 1938–1953 and Beyond," in *C. L. R. James and Revolutionary Marxism: Selected Writings, 1939–1949*, ed. Scott McLemee and Paul Le Blanc, 209–38 (Atlantic Highlands, NJ: Humanities Press, 1993), 216.

35. Grace Lee Boggs, "C. L. R. James: Organizing in the U.S.A., 1938–1953," in *C. L. R. James: His Intellectual Legacies*, ed. Selwyn Reginald Cudjoe and William E. Cain (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 1995), 164.

36. Constance Webb, *Not without Love: Memoirs* (Hanover, NH: Dartmouth College Press /University Press of New England, 2003), 169.

37. Ibid.

38. C. L. R. James, Raya Dunayevskaya, and Grace Lee, *State Capitalism and World Revolution* (1950; repr., Chicago: Charles H. Kerr, 1986), 113–35.

39. Robert Hill argues that James's understanding of "association" is based on Karl Marx's arguments about "direct association" in the 1844 manuscripts (particularly the section on "private property and communism"); Alexis de Tocqueville's assertion, in *Democracy in America*, that association is a fundamental feature of U.S. social life; and Frederick Jackson Turner's observation, in *The Frontier in American History*, that association in the United States is distinguished by its spontaneous and voluntary (versus traditional or customary) nature. See Hill's "Literary Executor's Afterword," in James, *American Civilization*, 317–19; as well as Karl Marx, *Economic and Philosophic Manuscripts of 1844*, in *Karl Marx–Frederick Engels Collected Works*, vol. 3 (New York: International Publishers, 1975), 229–346; Alexis de Tocqueville, *Democracy in America*, ed. J. P. Mayer and M. Lerner, trans. G. Lawrence (New York: Harper and Row, 1966); and Frederick Jackson Turner, *The Frontier in American History* (New York: Henry Holt, 1920). James's consideration of association within the abolition movement and black social life and within domestic relationships complicates this formulation (see especially chapters 2 and 7 of *American Civilization*), as does his later use of the term "association" to account for the difficulties within his own personal relationships with women. See the manuscript drafts for James's unfinished, unpublished autobiography: C. L. R. James, Autobiography a and b, n.d., TS, Box 5, Folder 11, C. L. R. James Papers, 1933–2001, Rare Book and Manuscript Library, Columbia University, New York.

40. C. L. R. James, *Notes on Dialectics: Hegel, Marx, Lenin* (1948; repr., London: Allison and Busby, 1980), 117.

41. Grace Lee married the Correspondence Publishing Committee member James Boggs and changed her name to Grace Lee Boggs in 1953. I refer to her as Lee here because that is the name she had when she first joined the Johnson-Forest Tendency.

42. Grace Lee Boggs, *Living for Change: An Autobiography* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1998), 61.

43. Grace Lee Boggs, "The Continuity of Living for Change: An Interview with Grace Lee Boggs," interview by L. Todd Duncan and Kathryne V. Lindberg, *Social Text* 19, no. 2 (2001): 49. Kathryne V. Lindberg, who did extensive research on Detroit radicalism, insisted, in conversations with me, that her friend Lee was "full of shit," insofar as she seemed to be denying the racism and sexism that were so pervasive in and around the plants at this time and that would have inhibited or overridden any such associations. Of course, racism and sexism structured life in and around the plants. That is what Correspondence sought, in part, to document. But, pace Lindberg, that does not necessarily foreclose the possibility that the kind of alternative sociality that Lee describes, however tentative, tenuous, or small in scale, might have emerged within and against it. The aesthetic sociality of blackness, in its own working of the problematic of sexual difference, would be an imperfect refuge for the alternative that awaited the reconstruction of the motleyness that Lee imagined and sought to enact.

44. Boggs, *Living for Change*, 54.

45. As Lee recalls, this was a strategic move: "To complete our break with the Old Left politics, mainly fought on the Lower East Side of New York, Raya [Dunayevskaya] moved to Detroit to set up our new office in that city." Ibid., 67.

46. Ibid., 61.

47. Grace Lee Boggs, in conversation with the author, April 2004.

48. Raya Dunayevskaya, "Socialism or Barbarism" *Correspondence*, 10 July 1954, available at the Marxist Internet Archive, http://www.marxists.org/archive/dunayevskaya/works/1954/socialism-barbarism.htm.

49. "On Workers' Culture," *Correspondence*, 12 December 1953.

50. Cartwright, [aka Selma Weinstein], "Report," Report to the Correspondence Group, September 1954, TS, Constance Webb Papers, Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture, New York, 4.

51. Boggs, *Living for Change*, 67–68.

52. Kent Worcester, *C. L. R. James: A Political Biography* (Albany: SUNY Press, 1996), 124.

53. Boggs, *Living for Change*, 99–100.

54. According to Kent Worcester, this is noted in a letter from C. L. R. James to "Pound," 1954, Martin and Jessie Glaberman Papers, Walter P. Reuther Library of

Labor and Urban Affairs, Wayne State University, Detroit, MI, quoted in Worcester, *C. L. R. James*, 126.

55. Webb mentions these affairs, in passing, and what she perceives to be the ongoing interference by members of the group in her marriage, throughout her memoir, *Not without Love*. See also, Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick, *Tendencies* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1993).

56. These documents were brought together, for a while, in a second newspaper-like publication, *Clearing House*, described expressly as "an experiment," an experimental attempt to reconfigure contact within the organization itself. This was not the first time the group had made use of an internal publication. From July to September 1947, while operating as the Johnson-Forest Tendency, the group produced the *Internal Bulletin*. As Frank Rosengarten notes, "The Internal Bulletin, true to its name, was strictly an in-house publication of the JFT [Johnson-Forest Tendency] designed to strengthen the solidarity and cohesiveness of its members. Its importance lies in the fact that it actively encouraged readers and members in all of its centers of operation to contribute their ideas to the leadership. This resulted in a lively current of critical interplay among the three 'layers' of the organization: its leading intellectuals, its industrial workers, and its ordinary rank-and-file members. Various members of the JFT who had not yet had a chance to express their views in print, such as Nettie Kravitz and Filomena Daddario, were able to air their views in the *Internal Bulletin*." Frank Rosengarten, *Urbane Revolutionary: C. L. R. James and the Struggle for a New Society* (Jackson: University Press of Mississippi, 2008), 81.

57. Cartwright, [aka Selma Weinstein], "Report," 25. Subsequent citations of this source appear parenthetically in the text.

58. As Cartwright went on to note in this very long report, the treatment of worker proposals was complex: "Since the first school, one of two things has happened. Either the word of the proletarian was taken verbatim or their words were interpreted to illustrate and support what someone wanted to say. You can't make a worker who comes out with some ridiculous proposal, because he wants to see the group move and try new things, responsible for that proposal" (ibid., 23).

59. Neff [aka Lyman Paine], Memo to the Correspondence Group, 24 August 1956, TS, Webb Papers, 3, 5.

60. Ibid., 5.

61. Th., Memo to the Correspondence Group, 3 July 1957, TS, Glaberman Papers.

62. Ibid., 2–3.

63. Cartwright, "Report," 17.

64. Hélio Oiticica, "EXPERIMENTACTION," 3 October 1972, 0508/72 (TS in English), Projeto Hélio Oiticica and Itaú Cultural: Programa Hélio Oiticica, 5.

65. Guy Brett, "Recollection," in *Oiticica in London*, ed. Guy Brett and Luciano Figueiredo (London: Tate, 2007), 11.

66. See Edward Pope, "Recollection," in Brett and Figueiredo, *Oiticica in London*, 47.

67. For a comprehensive account of this exhibition, see Amanda Saba Ruggiero, "Hélio Oiticica no MoMA de Nova York" [Hélio Oiticica at New York's MoMA], *Arquitextos* (São Paulo), 17 (June 2016): 193.01, Vitruvius, http://www.vitruvius.com.br/revistas/read/arquitextos/17.193/6087.

68. Vito Acconci interviewed by Marcos Bonisson in his video *Héliophonia*, 2002, quoted in Beatriz Scigliano Carneiro, *Relâmpagos com claror: Lygia Clark e Hélio Oiticica, vida como arte* [Bright lightning bolts: Lygia Clark and Hélio Oiticica, life as art] (São Paulo: Imaginário: FAPSEP, 2004), 255 (my translation).

69. Hélio Oiticica, "Appearance of the Supra-sensorial" (English translation of "Aparacimento do Suprasensorial," November–December 1967), in *Hélio Oiticica*, ed. Guy Brett, Catherine David, Chris Dercon, Luciano Figueiredo, and Lygia Pape, trans. Stephen Berg et al. (Paris: Galerie de nationale du Jeu de Paume; Rio de Janeiro: Projeto Hélio Oiticica; Rotterdam: Witte de With Center for Contemporary Art, 2000), 127.

70. Ibid., 128.

71. Ibid.

72. Hélio Oiticica to Guy Brett, 2 April 1968, in Brett et al., *Hélio Oiticica*, 135.

73. Ibid.

74. Hélio Oiticica, "MUNDO-ABRIGO" [World-shelter], 16 July 1973–27 October 1973, 0194/73 (TS in Portuguese with some English), Projeto Hélio Oiticica and Itaú Cultural: Programa Hélio Oiticica, 9–10 (my translation).

75. Ibid., 10.

76. Ibid.

77. Ibid.

78. Ibid.

79. Hélio Oiticica, "EXPERIÊNCIA LONDRINA : SUBTERRÂNEA" [London experience/experiment : Subterranea], 27 January 1970, 0290/70 (TS in Portuguese), Projeto Hélio Oiticica and Itaú Cultural: Programa Hélio Oiticica, 1 (my translation).

80. Hélio Oiticica, "sem título ['para INFORMATION exh. catalogue']" [untitled ['for INFORMATION exhibition catalogue']]," 21 April 1970, 0324/70 (TS in English), Projeto Hélio Oiticica and Itaú Cultural: Programa Hélio Oiticica.

81. Hélio Oiticica, "Creleisure," August 1970, in Brett et al., *Hélio Oiticica*, 138.

82. Oiticica to Clark, 15 May 1971, in *Cartas*, 199–200 (my translation).

83. This is, at least, what he imagines. However, as one frequent visitor, Oiticica's friend and collaborator Thomas Valentin, notes, the basic structure of the *Babylônests* at Loft 4 did not change all that much, at least at the architectural level, perhaps due to the scale and heft of the materials Oiticica used, recycled from the Nests he built for MOMA. Thomas Valentin, in conversation with the author, 28 July 2016.

84. Oiticica to Clark, 15 May 1971, 199–200 (my translation).

85. Valentin, in conversation with the author.

86. Oiticica, "FATOS" [Facts], 12 June 1973, 0316/73 (MS in Portuguese), Projeto Hélio Oiticica and Itaú Cultural: Programa Hélio Oiticica, 1 (translation by Barbara Browning).

87. As Valentin recalls, while many people visited, these Nests were not open to the general public, and after Oiticica's Second Avenue apartment, Loft 4, where the *Babylônests* were installed, was invaded by burglars, he left the apartment and set up new Nests, the *Hendrixsts*, at an apartment on Christopher Street. Valentin, in conversation with the author. Oiticica's refusal to include a sofa or other ordinary furnishings may have been to prevent people from staying too long so that Oiticica could work.

88. Waly Salomão, *Qual é o Parangolé?* [What is the Parangolé?] (Rio de Janeiro: Relume Dumará, 1996), 18 (my translation).

89. Hélio Oiticica, *LONDOCUMENTO* [Londocument], 27 August 1969, 0304/69, (TS in Portuguese), Projeto Hélio Oiticica and Itaú Cultural: Programa Hélio Oiticica, 1 (my translation). The "cabin-bed" he is referring to is the Bed Bolide which also appeared in the Eden.

90. Hélio Oiticica, "NEYRÓTIKA," April/May 1973, 0480/73, (TS in Portuguese, MS in English provided as appendix), Projeto Hélio Oiticica and Itaú Cultural: Programa Hélio Oiticica, 1.

91. Silviano Santiago and Décio Pignatari, both quoted in Celso Favaretto, *A invenção de Hélio Oiticica* [The invention of Hélio Oiticica] (São Paulo: Editora da Universidade de São Paulo, 1992), 136 (my translation).

92. C. L. R. James, "The Paper: Memo Number I—The Paper as a Weapon," Memorandum to the Correspondence Group, 25 February 1955, Webb Papers, 3.

93. Hélio Oiticica, "rhodislandia project," n.d., 0434/71 (drawn plan in English), Projeto Hélio Oiticica and Itaú Cultural: Programa Hélio Oiticica.

94. Jacqueline Barnitz, "Hélio Oiticica's Propositions," *Arts Magazine* 47, no. 1 (1972): 48.

95. C. L. R. James to G[race Lee], [2 July 1949], Raya Dunayevskaya Collection, Walter P. Reuther Library of Labor and Urban Affairs, Wayne State University, Detroit, MI, 2.

96. In a letter to Constance Webb, for example, he notes, "I am so-so, working without strain, tho' my hand is very shaky as you see," and in another, he says, "My hands are better—healed, tho' they remain rough—who cares?" C. L. R. James to Constance Webb, 31 August 1939 and 3 September 1948, in *Special Delivery: The Letters of C. L. R. James to Constance Webb, 1939–1948*, ed. Anna Grimshaw (Oxford, UK: Blackwell, 1996), 55. It does appear that most of the typing was done by women, however. James notes this throughout the drafts for his unpublished autobiography, writing, for example, "The girls [Dunayevskaya and Lee] not only worked at the theory but typed everything that was necessary and retyped." C. L. R. James,

Autobiography 1938–53, Photocopies, Box 4, Folder 16, part b, TS 10, Rare Book and Manuscript Library, Columbia University, New York. When I interviewed Grace Lee Boggs, she claimed that all she remembered of her role in these collaborative efforts was the typing. Grace Lee Boggs, in conversation with the author, 8 April 2004.

97. C. L. R. James, Raya Dunayevskaya, and Grace Lee (writing as J. R. Johnson, F. Forest, and Ria Stone), introduction to "Essays by Karl Marx Selected from the Economic-Philosophic MSS," 1947, TS, Webb Papers, 1–2.

98. Ibid., 2.

99. Hélio Oiticica, with Neville D'Almeida, Thomas Valentin, and others, "BLOCK EXPERIMENTS IN COSMOCOCA—Program in Progress" (1973), in *Hélio Oiticica: Quasi-Cinemas*, ed. Carlos Basualdo and Ann Bremner (Ostfildern-Ruit, Germany: Hatje Cantz, in association with Kölnischer Kunstverein, New Museum of Contemporary Art, Wexner Center for the Arts, 2001), 102.

100. Oiticica, "MUNDO-ABRIGO," 8 (my translation).

101. I am relying, here, on the rich descriptions and analyses of these spaces by two other critics: Caroline A. Jones, who reconstructs, by way of careful research, the space of Warhol's factory, and Stefan Brecht, who recalls his own experiences in Smith's loft. See Caroline A. Jones, *Machine in the Studio: Constructing the Postwar American Artist* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1996), esp. 191–98; and Stefan Brecht, *The Original Theatre of the City of New York: From the Mid-60s to the Mid-70s*, book 2, *Queer Theatre* (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1978), esp. 10–13.

102. Oiticica, "Creleisure," 137.

103. Ibid., 136.

104. Ibid.

105. Ibid., 137.

106. Buhle, *C. L. R. James*, 123.

107. Ibid., 119.

108. Hélio Oiticica, "O outro lado do Rio" [The other side of Rio], 8 December 1978, 0092/78 (TS in Portuguese), Projeto Hélio Oiticica and Itaú Cultural: Programa Hélio Oiticica, 1–2 (my translation).

109. Michael Hanchard, *Party/Politics: Horizons in Black Political Thought* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006), 226.

110. Ibid., 249.

3. Undocuments

1. Grace Lee Boggs, *Living for Change: An Autobiography* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1998), 60–61.

2. Hélio Oiticica interviewed by Jorge Guinle Filho, "A última entrevista de Hélio Oiticica" [The last interview of Hélio Oiticica], *Interview*, April 1980, also available through Projeto Hélio Oiticica, Rio de Janeiro, 1022/80, and reprinted

in *Hélio Oiticica: Encontros*, ed. Cesar Oiticica Filho and Ingrid Vieira (Rio de Janeiro: Azougue, 2009), quoted in Paola Berenstein Jacques, *Estética da ginga: A arquitetura das favelas através da obra de Hélio Oiticica* [The aesthetics of ginga: the architecture of the favelas through the work of Hélio Oiticica] (Rio de Janeiro: Casa da Palavra, 2001), 126 (my translation).

3. These journals included *Flor de Mal* (in which he published a series called "Babylonests"), *Navilouca*, and *Pólem*, among others. The Brazilian scholar Frederico Coelho tracks these publications in greater detail in *Livro ou livro-me: Os escritos babilônicos de Hélio Oiticica (1971–1978)* [Book or book-me / I liberate or I liberate myself: The Babylonian writings of Hélio Oiticica] (Rio de Janeiro: Editora da Universidade do Estado do Rio de Janeiro, 2010).

4. Thomas Valentin, in discussion with the author, 28 July 2016. Valentin maintains that Oiticica was not involved in this transaction.

5. C. L. R. James, *American Civilization*, ed. Anna Grimshaw and Keith Hart (Cambridge, UK: Blackwell, 1993), 26.

6. Ibid., 38–39.

7. Ibid., 26.

8. This term has already been used in interesting ways by a number of poets, including Juan Felipe Herrera, Rosa Alcalá, and Amy Sara Carroll. See Rosa Alcalá, *Undocumentaries* (Bristol, UK: Shearsman Books, 2010); Juan Felipe Herrera, *187 Reasons Mexicanos Can't Cross the Border: Undocuments 1971–2007* (San Francisco: City Lights, 2007); and Amy Sara Carroll's critical essay, "From Papapapá to Sleep Dealer: Alex Rivera's Undocumentary Poetics," *Social Identities* 19, nos. 3–4 (2013): 485–500.

9. C. L. R. James, *The Future in the Present: Selected Writings* (Westport, CT: Hill, 1977).

10. The chronology given here is informed by Anna Grimshaw and Keith Hart's introduction and Robert Hill's "Literary Executor's Afterword" to James's *American Civilization*.

11. Aldon Lynn Nielsen, *C. L. R. James: A Critical Introduction* (Jackson: University Press of Mississippi, 1997), 115.

12. C. L. R. James, *Notes on Dialectics: Hegel, Marx, Lenin* (1948; repr., London: Allison and Busby, 1980), 135, quoted in Nielson, *C. L. R. James*, 116.

13. Raya Dunayevskaya, "On C. L. R. James' Notes on Dialectics," 1972, available at the Marxist Internet Archive, https://www.marxists.org/archive/dunayevskaya/works/1972/misc/james.htm.

14. Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick, *Tendencies* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1993).

15. C. L. R. James, Autobiography 1932–38, Box 4, Folder 7, C. L. R. James Papers, 1933–2001, Rare Book and Manuscript Library, Columbia University, New York, 29.

16. Stathis Kouvelakis, "Lenin as Reader of Hegel: Hypotheses for a Reading of Lenin's Notebooks on Hegel's *The Science of Logic*," in *Lenin Reloaded: Toward*

a Politics of Truth, ed. Sebastian Budgen, Stathis Kouvelakis, and Slavoj Žižek (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2007), 179, 194.

17. Ibid., 179, 192.

18. Ibid., 192–93.

19. Ibid., 195. Kouvelakis takes the term "vanishing mediator" from an essay by Fredric Jameson, "The Vanishing Mediator: Narrative Structure in Max Weber," *New German Critique* 1 (Winter 1973): 52–89.

20. Dunayevskaya, "On C. L. R. James' Notes on Dialectics."

21. Martin Glaberman, "Review of *Notes on Dialectics: Hegel, Marx, Lenin*," by C. L. R. James, *Race & Class* 23, no. 1 (1981): 97, quoted in Nielsen, *C. L. R. James*, 115. The secrecy had to do with the explosiveness of its content. As Glaberman further notes, "It was such a devastating critique of Trotskyism that it had to be circulated surreptitiously—one typing on thin onion skin paper, about 6 or 8 copies, sent around in sections, each section having to be read and returned so that nothing was left lying around." Glaberman, "Review of *Notes on Dialectics*," 97.

22. Boggs, *Living for Change*, 99–100.

23. "Extracts from a Study of American Civilization," *Correspondence*, April 1956, 1.

24. Ibid., 4.

25. N [C. L. R. James] to 5, 17 July 1956, Martin and Jessie Glaberman Papers, Walter P. Reuther Library of Labor and Urban Affairs, Wayne State University, Detroit, MI, 1.

26. Ibid.

27. Ibid.

28. Ibid.

29. Ibid.

30. Grace Lee to N/e [possibly Nettie Kravitz], 24 June 1956, Glaberman Papers.

31. Neff [aka Lyman Paine], Memo to the Correspondence Group, 24 August 1956, Constance Webb Papers, Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture, New York, 3.

32. Ibid.

33. Th, Memo to the Correspondence Group, 3 July 1957, Glaberman Papers, 3.

34. Thompson to 5, 11 October 1956, Glaberman Papers, 1.

35. Ibid.

36. Ibid., 2.

37. James to unnamed recipients, 14 October 1953, Glaberman Papers, 1.

38. Lee to N/e, 24 June 1956, 1.

39. James to G[race Lee Boggs], 18 October 1953, Glaberman Papers.

40. Samuel R. Delany, "About 5,750 Words," in *The Jewel-Hinged Jar: Notes on the Language of Science Fiction* (1977; repr., Middletown, CT: Wesleyan University Press, 2009), 10.

41. Joanna Russ, "Speculations: The Subjunctivity of Science Fiction," in *To Write like a Woman: Essays in Feminism and Science Fiction* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1995), 15–25.

42. James describes the socialism he sees on the "shop floor" in a book he coauthored with Grace Lee and Pierre Chaulieu (aka Cornelius Castoriadis), *Facing Reality* (1958; repr., Chicago: Charles H. Kerr, 2006).

43. See Andrew Ross, "Civilization in One Country? The American James," in *Rethinking C. L. R. James*, ed. Grant Farred (Cambridge, UK: Blackwell, 1996), 75–76; and Nielsen, *C. L. R. James*, 161–62. See also C. L. R. James, *Mariners, Renegades, and Castaways: The Story of Herman Melville and the World We Live In* (1953; repr., Hanover, NH: University Press of New England, 1978), which James wrote in detention.

44. James, *American Civilization*, 155.

45. Ibid., 155–56.

46. Ibid., 148.

47. Ibid., 162.

48. Ibid., 156.

49. James, *Mariners, Renegades, and Castaways*, 166, 165.

50. Ibid., 126.

51. Ibid., 151.

52. Ibid., 153.

53. Ibid., 154.

54. Ibid., 160.

55. James, *American Civilization*, 276.

56. Ibid.

57. Oiticica had explored the possibilities of writing and toys with the idea of producing a literary work or book as art object earlier, as many others in Brazil had already been doing (including Ferreira Gullar, Lygia Clark, Lygia Pape, and others). Frederico Coelho has rigorously tracked every mention of the idea of a book in Oiticica's writing and many of the probable and possible sources of inspiration for such a book in his *Livro ou livro-me*.

58. Hélio Oiticica, "Allen Ginsburg," 2 July 1973 (MS in English), Projeto Hélio Oiticica and Itaú Cultural: Programa Hélio Oiticica, 1.

59. Hélio Oiticica, "PARA AUGUSTO DE CAMPOS," March 1974, 0505/74 (transcript of tape-recording in Portuguese), Projeto Hélio Oiticica and Itaú Cultural: Programa Hélio Oiticica, 6 (because the document begins new page numbers on "LADO B," however, the page number typed onto the document is 1) (my translation).

60. Frederico Coelho notes that he had already assumed the name in a February 1975 letter to Mary and Mário Pedrosa. See Hélio Oiticica to Mary and Mário Pedrosa, February 1975, 1411/75 (TS in Portuguese), Projeto Hélio Oiticica and Itaú Cultural: Programa Hélio Oiticica, quoted in Coelho, *Livro ou livro-me*, 228.

61. Guinle, "A última entrevista de Hélio Oiticica," quoted in Jacques, *Estética da ginga*, 126.

62. See, again, Mário Pedrosa, "On Antonio Manuel's Presentation at the Opening of the Salão Nacional de Arte Moderna, as a Work of Art" (1970), in *Primary Documents*, ed. Gloria Ferreira and Paulo Herkenhoff, trans. Stephen Berg (New York: Museum of Modern Art, 2015), 326. As the editors note, Pedrosa first used this phrase in 1970 in a conversation with Antonio Manuel, Alex Varela, and Hugo Denizart shortly after Manuel's performance of *O corpo é a obra* (The body is the work), in which he presented his own nude body as a work of art at Rio de Janeiro's Museu de Arte Moderna. The conversation was transcribed and edited by the artist Lygia Pape and then published, along with materials by Manuel, in the *Tema* supplement of *O jornal* on 15 July 1973. Ibid., 327n1.

63. Hélio Oiticica, "TO EXPERIMENT THE EXPERIMENTAL," 22 March 1972–1 January 1973, 0511/72 (MS in English), Projeto Hélio Oiticica and Itaú Cultural: Programa Hélio Oiticica, 2.

64. Ibid., 3.

65. Ibid., 6. The phrase "loosen threads" actually appears above of the term "scattered roots," perhaps as an alternative translation, just as the terms "ATTEMPT" and "TRY" appear above term "EXPERIMENT" in the title.

66. Hélio Oiticica, "Appearance of the Supra-sensorial" (English translation of "APARACIMENTO DO SUPRASENSORIAL," November–December 1967), in *Hélio Oiticica*, ed. Guy Brett, Catherine David, Chris Dercon, Luciano Figueiredo, and Lygia Pape, trans. Stephen Berg et al. (Paris: Galerie de nationale du Jeu de Paume; Rio de Janeiro: Projeto Hélio Oiticica; Rotterdam: Witte de With Center for Contemporary Art, 2000), 127.

67. Ibid.

68. Ibid., 128.

69. Hélio Oiticica, "Excerto do caderno de notas CTAL PK" [Excerpt from notebook of notes], 11 October 1971, 0241/71 (TS in Portuguese with some English), Projeto Hélio Oiticica and Itaú Cultural: Programa Hélio Oiticica, 1 (my translation).

70. Ibid., 3.

71. Oiticica, "Appearance of the Supra-sensorial," 165–66.

72. Hélio Oiticica, Notes, 4 March 1968, repr. in the posthumous collection of Oiticica's writings, edited by Figueiredo, et. al.: *Aspiro ao grande labirinto* 107, quoted in Celso Favaretto, *A invenção de Hélio Oiticica* [Hélio Oiticica's invention] (São Paulo: Editora da U de São Paulo, 1992), 136.

73. Hélio Oiticica, "*subterranean* TROPICÁLIA PROJECTS," September 1971, in Brett et al., *Hélio Oiticica*, 143.

74. Ibid.

75. Ibid., 143–44.

76. Ibid.

77. Hélio Oiticica, "Exposição? Eu não!" [Exhibition/explanation? Not I!], *A Última Hora* 29 (September 1971), quoted in Luciano Figueiredo, *Hélio Oiticica: Obra e estratégia* [Hélio Oiticica: work and strategy] (Rio de Janeiro: Museu de Arte Moderna do Rio de Janeiro, Projeto Hélio Oiticica, Prefeitura da Cidade do Rio de Janeiro, 2002), 21 (my translation). This was published, Figueiredo notes, in Torquato Neto's column "Geléia Geral."

78. Hélio Oiticica to Roberto Pontual, 16 April 1972, Archives of Funarte, Rio de Janeiro, quoted in Maria José Justino, *Seja marginal, seja herói: Modernidade e pós-modernidade em Hélio Oiticica* [Hélio Oiticica: to be marginal is to be a hero] (Curitiba, Brazil: Ed. da UFPR, 1998), 140 (my translation).

79. Hélio Oiticica interviewed by Carlos Alberto Messeder Pereira and Héloisa Buarque de Hollanda, "Entrevisa com Hélio Oiticica" [Interview with Hélio Oiticica], 1 February 1980, 0059/80 (TS in Portuguese), Projeto Hélio Oiticica and Itaú Cultural: Programa Hélio Oiticica, 2 (my translation).

80. Hélio Oiticica, "HAFERS—MONDRIAN—FK LLOYD WRIGHT—ROSSELLINI," 13 November 1971, 214.71 (TS in Portuguese), Projeto Hélio Oiticica and Itaú Cultural: Programa Hélio Oiticica, 1 (my translation).

81. Ibid. The quote is from Ferreira Gullar, "Teoria do não-objeto" ["Theory of the Non-Object"], Suplemento Dominical, *Jornal do Brasil*, 19–20 December 1959.

82. Hélio Oiticica, "A obra, seu caráter objetal, o comportamento" [The work, its object character, behavior], 1968, 160/68 (TS in Portuguese), Projeto Hélio Oiticica and Itaú Cultural: Programa Hélio Oiticica, reprinted in *Aspiro ao grande labarinto*, 118, translated and quoted in Mari Carmen Ramírez, "Hélio's Double-Edged Challenge," in *Hélio Oiticica: The Body of Color*, ed. Luciano Figueiredo and Mari Carmen Ramírez (London: Tate; Houston: Museum of Fine Arts, 2007), 22.

83. He quotes Mondrian here but does not give the citation: "In the future man will select and create his own environment. He will not then lament the lack of nature, as the masses do today, who were forced to leave it. . . . He will construct cities, beautiful and wholesome, through the equilibrium established between buildings, constructions, and empty spaces. He will feel as joyful and happy inside as outside the house." Oiticica, "HAFERS," 2.

84. Ibid., 1.

85. Ibid., 144, 148.

86. When Oiticica found that he was unable to install the *Penetrables* that he had envisioned for Central Park, he published photographs of his models in the art journal *Changes* with a description of his plan for "*subterranean* TROPICÁLIA PROJECTS" and the repertory. Here he describes the repertory in broader terms: "*repertory*: collection of propositions for various projects : cell-ideas not submitted to definite formal ends : also *propose to propose* issue as in former experiments : 'presented' open-images, not a 'representation' of anything 'significant' : poetically given reportorial images." See the mock-ups provided in the annex to the

layout for the "*subterranean* TROPICÁLIA PROJECTS" document, 1971, 270/71 (TS in English), Projeto Hélio Oiticica and Itaú Cultural: Programa Hélio Oiticica.

87. See 0420/71, n.d., Projeto Hélio Oiticica and Itaú Cultural: Programa Hélio Oiticica.

88. Hélio Oiticica, "Caderno 2/73" [Notebook], 22 June 1973–n.d., in *COSMOCOCA: Programa in progress* [COSMOCOCA: program in progress], ed. Andreas Valentin (Buenos Aires: La Stampa S.A., 2005), 71 (my translation). The quote appears on page 61 of the original document.

89. Waly Salomão, statement in *Delílrio Ambulatorio*, 2002, Mini DV, Projeto Hélio Oiticica (my translation). This video was on display at the exhibition of the *COSMOCOCA* series in 2005 at the Centro de Arte Hélio Oiticica in Rio de Janeiro.

90. For a more detailed discussion of New York's centrality to the art market, see Serge Guilbaut, *How New York Stole the Idea of Modern Art: Abstract Expressionism, Freedom and the Cold War*, trans. Arthur Goldhammer (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1983).

91. Hélio Oiticica to Neville D'Almeida, 20 January1974, in *COSMOCOCA*, 1 (my translation).

92. Hélio Oiticica, "bloco amarelo" [yellow notebook], 11 October 1971–15 September 1973, 210/71 (MS in Portuguese with some English), Projeto Hélio Oiticica and Itaú Cultural: Programa Hélio Oiticica, 26 (my translation).

93. This undated list is assumed to have been produced in 1974. Hélio Oiticica, "IMPRESCINDÍVEIS PARA NEWYORKAISES" [Indispensables for Newyorkaises], 1974, 0274/74 (MS in Portuguese and English), Projeto Hélio Oiticica and Itaú Cultural: Programa Hélio Oiticica, 1 (my translation). All quotations in the following paragraph are from this document.

94. The notes are titled "COSMOCOCA as drafted and synthesized for inclusion in NEWYORKAISES," 22 October 1973.

95. This is listed as an "annex" to the "IMPRESCINDÍVEIS" list in the Projeto Hélio Oiticica archive (my translation).

96. Hélio Oiticica, "Meu trabalho é subterrâneo" [My work is subterranean], 10–17 March 1970, 0307/70 (TS in Portuguese), Projeto Hélio Oiticica and Itaú Cultural: Programa Hélio Oiticica (my translation).

97. Hélio Oiticica, "sem título ['para INFORMATION exh. catalogue']" [untitled ['for INFORMATION exhibition catalogue']]," 21 April 1970, 0324/70 (TS in English), Projeto Hélio Oiticica and Itaú Cultural: Programa Hélio Oiticica.

98. Such notes can be found in many of the manuscripts Oiticica sent out for publication. See, for example, 0172/76, 184/74, 0269/71, and 270/71, Projeto Hélio Oiticica and Itaú Cultural: Programa Hélio Oiticica. There are many other examples in Oiticica's archive.

99. André Lepecki uses this word to describe Oiticica's invented terms in his essay "The Non-time of Lived Experience: The Problem of Color in Hélio Oiticica's

Early Works," *Representations* 136 (Fall 2016): 77–95. See in particular his discussion of the word on pages 87–88.

100. Oiticica et al., "BLOCK EXPERIMENTS IN COSMOCOCA," 103.

101. Ibid., 102.

102. Quoted in Beatriz Scigliano Carneiro, *Relâmpagos com claror: Lygia Clark e Hélio Oiticica, vida como arte* [Bright lightning bolts: Lygia Clark and Hélio Oiticica, life as art] (São Paulo: Imaginário: FAPSEP, 2004), 213 (my translation). I have not been able to find the original document in the Programa Hélio Oiticica / Projeto Hélio Oiticica archives.

103. James, *American Civilization*, 39.

104. Boggs, *Living for Change*, 100.

105. Hélio Oiticica, "riscado pra NEW SET NESTS" [Sketch for NEW NEST SET], 29 November 1974, 0180/74 (sketches and notes in Portuguese with some English), Projeto Hélio Oiticica and Itaú Cultural: Programa Hélio Oiticica, 4 (my translation).

106. Ibid., 3.

107. Hélio Oiticica and Thomas Valentin, "CC6 COKE HEAD'S * SOUP /—a parody / GOAT'S HEAD SOUP," 25 September 1973–1 October 1973, 0446/73 (TS in English), Projeto Hélio Oiticica and Itaú Cultural: Programa Hélio Oiticica, 1–3. Oiticica cites Cage as the inspiration for the embrace of such extraneous elements.

108. Michel Foucault, *The History of Madness*, trans. Jonathan Murphy and Jean Khalfa (London: Routledge, 2006), xxxi.

109. Ibid., xxxi–xxxii.

110. See Samuel R. Delany, *Times Square Red, Times Square Blue* (New York: NYU Press, 1999).

111. It is worth noting that while James may have sometimes been complicit in promoting himself as an individual author (see W. Chris Johnson, "Sex and the Subversive Alien: The Moral Life of C. L. R. James," *International Journal of Francophone Studies* 14, nos. 1–2 [2011]: 185–203), he later began to recognize his own sexism. (see Aaron Kamugisha, "The Hearts of Men? Gender in the Late C. L. R. James," *Small Axe* 34 [March 2011]: 76–94). Oiticica, however, never disavowed his influences, invoking and even including work by other artists in his own efforts. The publication of memoirs by women involved in the Correspondence Publishing Committee and the publication of the letters between Oiticica and Lygia Clark have contributed to a greater understanding of how interlocution and collaboration figured into James's and Oiticica's work, as have the many interviews that have since been given by James's and Oiticica's colleagues.

112. Susan Howe, *The Birth-mark: Unsettling the Wilderness in American Literary History* (Hanover, NH: Wesleyan University Press / University Press of New England, 1993), 9.

113. James to G[race Lee], 18 October 1953, TS, Glaberman Papers.

114. Webb notes in her memoirs that Lee later went back and wrote marginal notes alongside James's in many of James's books so that her thoughts would be remembered along with his. See Constance Webb, *Not without Love: Memoirs* (Hanover, NH: Dartmouth College Press / University Press of New England, 2003). Dunayevskaya wrote retrospective commentary in the margins of the letters she had exchanged with James and Lee during their collective reading of Hegel. See microfilm pages 9209–44, Raya Dunayevskaya Papers, Walter P. Reuther Library of Labor and Urban Affairs, Wayne State University, Detroit, MI.

115. Howe, *Birth-mark*, 15.

116. Sexual intercourse is, according to the *Oxford English Dictionary*, one of the archaic definitions of this word. See "Correspondence," in *The Compact Edition of the Oxford English Dictionary* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1971).

117. Oiticica notes in a letter to his fellow artist Lygia Clark, dated 8 November 1968, "The artist cannot in fact measure . . . participation since each person experiences it differently. This is why there is this unbearable experience [*vivência*] of ours, of being deflowered, of possession, as if he, the spectator, would say: Who are you? What do I care if you created this or not? Well I am here to modify everything, this unbearable shit that proposes dull experiences, or good ones, libidinous, fuck you, and all this because I devour you, and then I shit you out." See this letter, translated by Michael Asbury, in Claire Bishop, ed., *Participation*, Documents of Contemporary Art (London: Whitechapel; Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2006), 111–13.

118. Hélio Oiticica to Neville D'Almeida, 20 January1974, in *COSMOCOCA*, 78 (my translation).

119. Ibid., 79.

120. Ibid., 137.

121. I am borrowing the term "abnormative" from the filmmaker and film theorist Arthur Jafa.

122. The term "proletariat" literally means "producers of offspring." See the *Encyclopedia Britannica Online*, http://www.britannica.com/topic/proletariat.

123. Howe, *Birth-mark*, 1.

124. Hannah Arendt, *The Human Condition*, 2nd ed. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1998), 242.

125. Ibid., 61. Arendt goes further to suggest that it was the very basis for being considered human: "It is therefore not really accurate to say that private property, prior to the modern age, was thought to be a self-evident condition for admission to the public realm; it is much more than that. Privacy was like the other, the dark and hidden side of the public realm, and while to be political meant to attain the highest possibility of human existence, to have no private place of one's own (like a slave) meant to be no longer human." Ibid., 64.

126. Arendt makes this clear when she valorizes the restriction of the citizenry in Greek city-states and their understanding that this was what differentiated them from the despotism of the Persians. As she writes:

> It is obvious that every increase in population means an increased validity and a marked decrease of "deviation." Politically, this means that the larger the population in any given body politic, the more likely it will be the social rather than the political that constitutes the public realm. The Greeks, whose city-state was the most individualistic and least conformable body politic known to us, were quite aware of the fact that the polis, with its emphasis on action and speech, could survive only if the number of citizens remained restricted. Large numbers of people, crowded together, develop an almost irresistible inclination toward despotism, be this the despotism of a person or of majority rule; and although statistics, that is, the mathematical treatment of reality, was unknown prior to the modern age, the social phenomena which make such treatment possible—great numbers, accounting for conformism, behaviorism, and automatism in human affairs—were precisely those traits which, in Greek self-understanding, distinguished the Persian civilization from their own. (Ibid., 43)

127. Howe, *Birth-mark*, 158.

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